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# Mobile Ideas and (Im)mobile Subjects: Women Writers and Women's Fashion Magazines in Nineteenth-Century Germany and Austria

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Mobile Ideas and (Im)mobile Subjects: Women Writers and Women's Fashion  
Magazines in Nineteenth-Century Germany and Austria.

by

Ruxandra Marcu Looft

A dissertation presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2012

Saint Louis, Missouri

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For Colette

## Introduction

### I. Mobility, Class, and Gender

Berlin, January 1878. The German women's magazine *Der Bazar* hits newsstands with a full-page front cover illustration of two women roller skating while a little boy looks on. Their legs are in flight; their bodies are in motion. Scarves and bustles blow in the wind as the two skaters glide across the rink. Their arms reach out for one another; their faces are cool and relaxed as they skate in unison and seeming nonchalance.

This front-page illustration of two roller skaters represents a lonely minority of images depicting women in motion in nineteenth-century newsprint. In this particular publication's sixty years of print, only a handful of images show women engaged in a sport or active physical activity of any sort. Women appear posed in garments suggesting movement, such as in horseback-riding outfits or swimsuits, without actually being depicted in motion or in pursuit of these physical undertakings. Their garments merely suggest the possibility of such adventures.

Meanwhile, the end of the nineteenth century saw the advent of the safety bicycle and the upsurge of the roller-skating rink. Tennis, horseback riding, swimming, hiking, and ice-skating were further options for the active woman in need of amusement and physical exercise. Yet literary descriptions of these forms of mobility and of women as mobile subjects was fleeting at best; illustrated women's magazines gradually began incorporating depictions of women engaging in these aforementioned activities by the late 1880s and mid 1890s, and women writers incorporated mentions of athleticism and mobility with a cautionary tone.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's story *Komtesse Muschi*, for instance, expresses the social unease with athletic women in no uncertain terms; the female heroine is described as more closely resembling a jockey than an upper class lady, preferring to gallop, hunt, be outdoors, and raise dogs. Her foil, Clara Aarheim – whose name, incorporating the word “home,” suggests domesticity and family at a glance – presents to the reader the quintessential nineteenth-century idea of woman; quiet, demure, content to be indoors reading or sewing, and eschewing most forms of physical activity. Ebner-Eschenbach's story of Komtesse Muschi reads like a cautionary tale to the reader tempted to forgo traditionally female-coded roles in favor of more masculine-coded feats of athleticism and adventure. Her message is made plain in the last paragraph of the story as Komtesse Muschi finds herself alone and abandoned by her love interest. She writes to her friend Nesti: “Lebe wohl, mein liebes Wesen, und merke Dir: es ist nicht immer so angenehm, als man glaubt, eine Sportskomteß zu sein.”<sup>1</sup> This “liebes Wesen” (dear friend) receiving the letter, and the message within it, is not only Nesti but also the reader who is warned against the consequences of being a “Sportskomteß.” This new kind of athletic and mobile woman lives on the periphery, accepted and loved by friends and family, but nonetheless an outsider and comical figure forsaken by love and marriage prospects.

Ebner-Eschenbach's story is not alone in pointing to the incongruities of life as a mobile woman and a socially well-integrated individual. Other stories by nineteenth-century women writers similarly point to the difficulties encountered when pursuing

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<sup>1</sup> Marie von Ebner Eschenbach, *Komtesse Muschi* (Munich: Aremis Verlag, 1984), 46. Translation: “So long, my dear friend, and remember this: being an athletic countess is not always as pleasant as one might think.”



traditionally masculine activities such as horseback riding or hunting and when undertaking such seemingly innocent tasks as going for a walk without the company of a male chaperone or older family member. Often the critique focuses on the instruments of mobility themselves: the symbols and signs that represent a larger social woe. The corset, the altogether restrictive fashions of the time, the shoe, the horse; they all represent either an increasing struggle to sustain conventionality or an inevitable departure from class and gender norms as society and everyday life in Europe were changing.

An investigation of these symbols of mobility as presented in the print media of the time offers insight into the workings of nineteenth-century social and gender codes through the lens of everyday objects and their usage. Notions of class and gender affect how accoutrements of mobility are written and talked about, just as the writings and discussions surrounding certain objects determine how they become class and gender appropriate. Symbols of mobility both inform and are molded by the ethos of their time; they are both products and producers of cultural knowledge. In this dissertation, I am interested in the presentation of these products and producers of class and gender norms within the pages of popular writings for and by women. The German magazine *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, the American *Harper's Bazar*, and the French *La Mode Illustrée, Journal de la Famille*, as well as works by writers Rosa Mayreder, Louise Otto Peters, and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach constitute my objects of study.

## **II. Nineteenth-Century Mass Media as Locus of Gender and Class**

The women's magazine *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung* was published in Berlin between 1855 and 1922. It aimed to inform readers about fashion, home life,

cosmopolitanism, and aesthetics. Less than a decade after its inauguration, it was being translated into French, Spanish, and English.<sup>2</sup> By 1891, it became the best-selling publication of women's fashion magazines and home magazines in Germany targeting primarily middle to upper class women.<sup>3</sup> According to its editors at Louis Schaefer Verlag in Berlin, the magazine's aim was to establish a "Weltruf" (global reputation) as a "Weltblatt" (global newspaper),<sup>4</sup> priding itself on its international scope and influence.

Its American sister magazine, *Harper's Bazar*, was founded in 1867 in New York by Harper and Brothers. It was touted as "a repository of Fashion, Pleasure and Instruction," aiming to "increase the happiness of American families."<sup>5</sup> Like its German counterpart, it focused on women's fashions, current events, and international trends aimed at the affluent upper class woman. The hold of *Harper's Bazar* on originality lay in its claim to be the only American magazine to receive lithographs from Germany

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<sup>2</sup> See *Fürstenthum Ratzeburg*, 1863. <http://wafr.lbm.v.de/show.php?action=1863-12-11>. An 1863 issue of the newspaper *Fürstenthum Ratzeburg* features a story on *Der Bazar*, offering the following information: "Die deutsche Original=Ausgabe zählt eine Auflage von 105,000 Exemplaren, die französische 32,000, die spanische 15,000, die englische 50,000, - im Ganzen also über 200,000 Exemplare." The article is accompanied by a large image of the masthead of *Der Bazar* along with content information for a typical issue and subscription information.

<sup>3</sup> See Andreas Graf, *Die Ursprünge der modernen Medienindustrie: Familien- und Unterhaltungszeitschriften der Kaiserzeit (1870-1918)*. AbLit: 2007. <http://www.zeitschriften.ablit.de/graf/42>.

<sup>4</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, January 1869, 1. A letter from the editors graces the front page of the first issue of January 1869 in which the editors express pride at having established international audience and widespread recognition of their publication. At this time, the American version of *Der Bazar* titled *Harper's Bazar* was in circulation for two years and gaining readership across the ocean, prompting the German editors to laud their magazine for its reputation as a "Weltblatt." "Der 'Bazar' bewies von Jahr zu Jahr, dass es dem wachsenden Erfolg durch ein rastloses Streben, dem *Weltruf* als ein *Weltblatt* im besten Sinne entspreche. Wir werden auch in diesem neuen Jahrgang uns bemühen, nicht nur wie bisher allen Anforderungen an eine Frauenzeitung Rechnung zu tragen, sondern alle früheren Jahrgänge an Reichtum und Mannigfaltigkeit des Inhalts zu überflügeln" (emphasis mine). Translation: "Der 'Bazar' has proven from year to year that it lives up to its tireless effort to establish a *world-wide reputation* as an *international publication*. We strive with this year's issues to not only fulfill our task as a women's publication but to surpass in richness and complexity the issues of past years."

<sup>5</sup> Stella Blum, *Victorian Fashions and Costumes from Harper's Bazar, 1867-1898* (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), vi.

*before* they went to print in Europe. The American reader could receive the latest information on trends and fashion at the same time as these went to press in Paris and Berlin; she no longer had to wait until after the fact for these to reach American newsstands.<sup>6</sup> *Harper's Bazar* continued to sell well with North American readers long after the German *Der Bazar* ceased to exist, still thriving today under the slightly modified name of *Harper's Bazaar*.

The third magazine to play a role in my study is *La Mode Illustrée, Journal pour la famille*. It was published in Paris and spanned nearly seven decades (1860- 1926), mirroring *Der Bazar* in many aspects, including length, layout, and use of images. *La Mode Illustrée* was unique in its time for having a female editor – the famous Mme. Emmeline Raymond – who ran the magazine until her death in 1902.<sup>7</sup> As editor, writer, and prolific translator, Mme. Raymond contributed to *La Mode Illustrée* as both arbiter and informant of what was constituted *bon gout* for her nineteenth-century readership. She also directly informed the readership of *Harper's Bazar* in her role as foreign correspondent to the American magazine.<sup>8</sup> Mme. Raymond, too, prized an international approach to magazine editing and publishing. Well aware of the German writer E. Marlitt's tremendous literary success, she translated many of Marlitt's works for reprint in French in *La Mode Illustrée*. Marlitt's contributions to the German family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* are largely credited for the publication's continued popularity and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., v.

<sup>7</sup> Raphaëlle Renken-Deshayes, "*Miroir, Mon Beau Miroir...*" *L'identité Féminine Définie Par Un Journal De Mode. La Mode Illustrée* (Neuchatel: Editions Alphil, 2004), 62.

<sup>8</sup> Blum, 3.

success, and Mme. Raymond knew how to appreciate and appropriate such value-enhancing material for the benefit of her own Parisian magazine.

As these three examples demonstrate, the fashion and magazine industry of the nineteenth century operated on a larger international level. The successful magazines of Europe and North America were well aware of their competitors or potential collaborators beyond national borders. Thus, it is impossible to talk about a German fashion industry without taking into account the larger international context within which fashion and the fashion magazine were developing. By extension, it also proves more interesting to analyze the ideas pertaining to mobility, gender, and class that were portrayed in the popular German magazine, *Der Bazar*, with reference to the international dialogue taking place at the time. Traces of foreign influence are readily found throughout *Der Bazar* just as *Der Bazar* contributed ideas and ideologies to its North American sister magazine. While it was exporting German culture to New York, *Der Bazar* was promoting mostly French culture to its own German readers.

French jargon and names appear throughout the pages of *Der Bazar*. The publication made no secret of drawing much of its material from Paris; far fewer references are made to London or other influential European capitals of the time. *Der Bazar* was also careful to draw distinctions between what was to be embraced from international sources and what was to remain particularly German and resistant to foreign influence. In this way, the German fashion magazine industry was directly involved in the nation-building process of the Wilhelmine period. Communicating with fashion industries all over the world, the magazine's publishers were acutely aware of the discourses regarding class and gender presentation taking place on a global level and they

carefully chose how to present this narrative to a national and specifically German audience. *Der Bazar* in turn directly influenced how the new German housewife understood her role and that of her husband and children.

### **III. Technology, the Printing Press, and Nineteenth-Century Reading Culture**

Newspapers and magazines in general prospered and gained in influence during the nineteenth century, boasting unprecedented peaks in readership and distribution numbers. This growth can in part be attributed to improvements in the printing and publishing industry that allowed for books and newspapers to be printed at a fraction of the cost and time it had previously taken. German inventor Friedrich Koenig and his watchmaker partner Friedrich Bauer were the first to patent a high-speed printing press (*Tiegeldruckmaschine*), which partially printed a book for the first time in 1810.<sup>9</sup> A lack of public interest, however, led Koenig and Bauer to England, where John Walter, owner of *Times* magazine, purchased two of their high-speed printing presses to be debuted in November 1814. The two presses combined were capable of printing 16,000 impressions per hour, monumentally increasing the output of the *Times*. Bauer and Koenig made it possible for the entire distribution of one issue of the *Times* to be printed in one night beginning with that November inauguration of their machines.<sup>10</sup> This event changed both printing and newspaper history and brought about an era of mass communication previously unimaginable.

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<sup>9</sup> Helmut Presser, "Das 19. und 20. Jahrhundert" in: *Das Buch vom Buch* (Bremen: Carl Schünemann Verlag, 1962), 188.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

As the Koenig and Bauer example illustrates, advances in the printing and publishing industry on a technological level were, just as in the case of the fashion industry, not restricted to a given country. Rather, inventors and investors worked together across national lines to improve their products and enhance their profits. In France, Parisian papermaker Louis Robert contributed to the paper making side of the industry. He replaced the thicker parchment paper that had come in individual rectangular sheets with a thinner paper that could be wrapped around a scroll. Robert obtained a patent for his invention in 1799, just in time for the German inventors Bauer and Koenig to use this product in their new machines.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, it took collaborations on an international level to build the printing industry that dominated the nineteenth century. As profits were made, both the magazine publishing industry and the fashion industry embraced this international cooperation for the benefit of all involved.

As a result, *Der Bazar*, *Harper's Bazar*, and *La Mode Illustrée* came to the scene at a propitious time: printing was quick and affordable, and readers were eager for new voices and specialty publications. Genre magazines such as these had the advantage of appearing focused, specialized, and dedicated to the interests of their particular readership. They also enforced the idea that books and printed information were no longer just for the intellectual elite or for clergy. Anyone with reading knowledge and spare pocket money could gain access to these printed works covering everything from fashion to science to social commentary. Reading knowledge was not even mandatory; the fashion magazines had to their benefit a prolific use of images and illustrations to convey their messages. Although literacy rates rose dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century, fashion magazines had the advantage of appealing to the consumer

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 195.

who was less literarily inclined. It comes as little surprise that the fashion industry was internationally successful, since much of its offering could be communicated through visual cues, without readers needing to master a foreign language. Although the typical fashion magazine used text to elaborate on the images presented, the viewer did not depend on the understanding of that text to appreciate the images at hand.

One need only consider the roller-skating example of the 1878 cover of *Der Bazar* presented at the beginning of this chapter. The large-scale image of the two women roller skating together presents the perfect opportunity for the reader to infer whatever he or she may desire regarding the act of roller skating, the role of women, or the context of the situation. The only relevant text accompanying this image is the caption reading “Skating-rink Anzüge für Damen und Kinder.”<sup>12</sup> Other than this simple explanation no reference is made to the activity on display. The remaining text surrounding the image gives instructions for a “Wiegendecke mit Strickerei” (embroidered crib blanket) and “Garnitur zum Beinkleidern” (embellishments for breeches).<sup>13</sup> As this example indicates, the text was not always of primary importance when it came to communicating messages regarding class or gender to the consumers of fashion magazines. The prolific use of images played a significant role in constructing gender and class understanding, often taking up more publication space than the text and words accompanying them.

Although images decreased the importance of literacy for the enjoyment of magazines, literacy rates were, as already noted, on the rise in Europe at this time. By the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of Western Europeans could read. By 1871,

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<sup>12</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*. Januray 1878, Translation: “Skating rink outfits for ladies and children.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

88 percent of the German Reich was literate, with France and Britain boasting similar numbers. By the late 1890s, 90 percent of citizens in the large metropolitan cities of Europe could read.<sup>14</sup> The shortening of the work day for the white collar (male) worker, the migration to urban areas, and the expansion of the middle class all contributed to this phenomenon. Genre magazines, penny novels, and inexpensive reprints of canonical texts made up the gamut of print media that was readily available to the eager consumer and women made up a large contingent of that reading audience.

Women occupied a complex space in the nineteenth-century literary world. They were present on all levels; as (invisible) workers in the large printing factories,<sup>15</sup> as (often invisible) writers publishing under pseudonyms,<sup>16</sup> and as (visible) readers and consumers. Their role as readers was perhaps the least covert as women of the middle and upper classes were increasingly encouraged to act as buyers for their families. Books and magazines were both products to be consumed and media for the promotion of consumption. The books themselves could be proudly displayed in home libraries and salons while the texts within the books dictated and inspired further purchasing of

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<sup>14</sup> Martyn Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers," *A History of Reading in the West*. eds. Cavallo Guglielmo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Chochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). 313.

<sup>15</sup> See Ernst Peter Bielsalski and Dag-Ernst Peterson, *Gebunden in der Dampfbuchbinderei. Buchbinden im Wandel des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), 95. According to Bielsalski, women often made up more than half the factory workers in a printing business while earning considerably less than their male counterparts, the reason being their "geringere Bedürfnisse" (lesser needs). He notes that female workers employing the "Vergoldepressen" (gold press) would earn merely 10-12 Marks for each 21-27 Marks earned by their male counterparts. Similarly, a male "Rollscherer" (cutter) would receive 21 Mark for every 9 Mark a female "Rollscherer" earned. Female factory workers were also the first to lose their positions when the business slowed.

<sup>16</sup> While some texts in *Der Bazar* were printed under author pseudonyms, other were offered with no author credit altogether. Similarly, texts translated from another language at times omitted the author credit for the original and only provided the translator's information. The question of authorship is thus a complicated one.



material goods. Women as readers were closely linked to women as consumers and thus occupied a more welcomed space than their writing counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

#### IV. Nineteenth-Century Women Writers

Women writers commonly hid under the disguise of a male penname in an attempt to escape the criticism often lobbed at them because of their sex. Nineteenth-century women writers who are well recognized in scholarship today began their careers under the guise of gender-ambiguous pennames or monikers: Bertha von Suttner published as “Jemand” or “B. Oulot,” the Austrian playwright Elsa Bernstein wrote under the pseudonym of “Ernst Rosmer,” Rosa Mayreder began her literary career as the art critic “Franz Arnold,” and Louise Otto Peters first published as “Otto Stern.”

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, by contrast, did not adopt a penname but did encounter difficulties regarding her gender and authorship of her work. When her play *Maria Stuart in Schottland* fell into the hands of Karlsruhe Theatre director Eduard Devrient, he received it with lavish praise. Only after discovering that the play was not written by a *Herr* von Eschenbach, did his admiration diminish considerably. When Devrient finally met Ebner-Eschenbach some two years later, all he was said to remark was “Ihr Aussehen ist erschreckend hässlich,” only further perpetuating stereotypes of women writers as homely and socially undesirable and thus enforcing the idea that there was little room for the creative and learned woman in nineteenth-century Austria.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> As readers, too, women encountered a host of rules and restrictions imposed by both society and their family members. Works such as Gabriele Reuter’s *Aus Guter Familie* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1895) exemplify the patriarchal attitude towards women reading anything outside of the sphere of sanctioned materials usually consisting of “safe” and innocuous books on flower pressing or religion.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara Denscher, *Kunst und Kultur in Österreich: das 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: C. Brandstätter, 1999). 87. Translation: “Her appearance is frightfully ugly.”

Despite these obstacles, Ebner-Eschenbach continued to write and publish prolifically, becoming one of Austria's most well known women writers then and today.

Karin Tebben describes the conflict faced by nineteenth-century women writers as one where "Schriftstellerei" (scribbling) existed in direct opposition to a traditional "Weiblichkeitsrolle" (femininity).<sup>19</sup> Especially in the homes of well-off families, a wife or daughter working outside the home signaled a decline in financial status and was more likely to reflect poorly upon the patriarch of the home than positively upon the woman. Tebben compares the perceived shame of a working daughter or wife to that of "Rufmord" (character slandering), noting that such activity was seen as damaging the name and social reputation of the "Hausherrn" (master of the house) and was likely to be met with forceful opposition from the family.<sup>20</sup> As readers, women were at liberty to proclaim their love for (sanctioned) books publicly, but as writers, they had to navigate a biased and patriarchal institution that did not gladly open its doors to its newest female members.

Mayreder, Otto Peters, and Ebner-Eschenbach, however, all enjoyed literary fame and recognition in their time. Rosa Mayreder wrote, published, gave public speeches, and promoted educational reform. Her life's work was honored with the title of "Ehrenbürgerin" by the city of Vienna on her eightieth birthday.<sup>21</sup> She wrote fiction, speeches, and theoretical pieces, the most famous being her 1905 work *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit*, a response to Otto Weininger's misogynistic *Geschlecht und Charakter*.

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<sup>19</sup> Karin Tebben, "Soziokulturelle Bedingungen weiblicher Schriftkultur," *Beruf: Schriftstellerin. Schreibende Frauen im 18. Und 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998), 27.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> This title was later revoked because of her Jewish grandfather.

The Austrian Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach likewise found literary success during her lifetime. A product of the Austrian nobility, she focused on the lives and struggles of upper class women as well as on the tensions between the ever-growing bourgeoisie and the diminishing aristocracy. Like Mayreder's, Ebner-Eschenbach's work gradually won acceptance and then even admiration and respect. She, too, was honored with the *Ehrenkreuz* for Arts and Literature in 1898 and later with the first honorary doctorate awarded to a woman by the University of Vienna.

Meanwhile, Louise Otto Peters was at the forefront of the bourgeois women's movement in Germany. She co-founded the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (General Union of German Women) with Auguste Schmidt in 1866 and then, in 1848, founded the *Frauen Zeitung*, a newspaper produced by women for an audience sympathetic to the women's movement. Constantly subject to censorship and restriction, her newspaper only lasted for two years. Her works, likewise, underwent strict censorship, thus testifying to the acute and candid manner with which she tackled questions of politics, religion, and social class. Her most well-known novel, *Schloss und Fabrik* (1846), offers lengthy conversations between factory workers and their superiors and between aristocrats and their social equals. She presents voices both sympathetic to the worker's plight and fearful of the workers' uprisings, calling attention to the political and social thoughts and fears of that time.<sup>22</sup>

All three of these writers were recognized for their literary talents and contributions at the time of their involvement in the German-speaking literary world.

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<sup>22</sup> See Louise Otto Peters, *Schloß und Fabrik* (Leipzig: Verlag von Adolph Wienbrack, 1846). Many of those key passages were, however, cut and removed before her novel could receive publication. They are now available to the modern reader in unabridged versions that are true to the original uncensored manuscript.

Distinguished prizes and honorary degrees (such as the aforementioned first doctorate to be awarded to a woman by the university of Vienna) confirm the level of professional recognition these women achieved. It is therefore all the more striking how relatively absent from modern scholarship they are. While German scholars specializing in women writers of the nineteenth century will easily identify their names, scholars working on earlier or later time periods will often only be familiar with the more famous of the three: Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. Louie Otto Peters, a founding member of the German feminist movement, and Rosa Mayreder, whose face at one point graced the five hundred Schilling note, remain largely obscure to scholars today. Once well known and appreciated, they are now relegated to the margins of German literary scholarship, despite their invaluable contributions to the nineteenth-century literary world and their unique take on gender and class issues.

Stephanie Hilger stresses the importance of rediscovering and redistributing the lost or forgotten works of women writers of centuries past in her work *Women Write Back, Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790-1805*. Hilger names several reasons in support of studying overlooked women's texts, among which two reasons resonate particularly well with my work in this dissertation; first, they provide another perspective on a given intellectual and political moment and, second, they serve a greater feminist purpose.

## **V. Feminist Literary Criticism and the Concept of "Writing Back"**

Hilger's argument in *Women Write Back* focuses the question of feminist literary criticism and its role in scholarship today. She identifies the different voices in this

debate<sup>23</sup> and argues in favor of feminist scholarship as still pertinent and necessary.

According to Hilger, (post)feminists should strive to combat the “nonchalant attitude toward past, present, and future feminist work.”<sup>24</sup> She cites the words of scholar Sharon Marcus, who argues,

When there are no women writers on the syllabus, or fewer than there should be, the message is that women’s writing is less valuable than men’s, that women, by extension, are worth less than men and that female students will be valued only if they devote themselves to what really counts – the masterworks of genius that too many syllabi still assert to be male handiwork.<sup>25</sup>

Hilger’s argument is not limited to syllabus construction. This is just one example of how the contemporary appreciation and distribution of past literary works perpetuates the very gender prejudices that hindered women in the past. Contemporary canon selection and research foci can reinforce or challenge previous ways of determining scholarly worth. According to Hilger, feminist work is never done as long as the unbalanced gender distribution of public figures of the past continues to be perpetuated by canon makers today.

Hilger’s argument becomes all the more compelling when we consider the disappearance of literary figures such as Mayreder or Otto Peters, who once enjoyed success and acclaim, from contemporary scholarship. Hilger is arguing, by contrast, in favor of returning to previous time periods in search of never or under-appreciated and

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<sup>23</sup> See Stephanie M. Hilger, *Women Write Back. Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790-1805* (New York: Rodopi, 2009). Hilger points to the debate triggered by the Susan Gubar’s essay “What Ails Feminist Criticism?” (*Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 4, Summer 1998, 878-902). Gubar’s arguments were countered in Robyn Wiegman’s follow-up essay “What Ails Feminist Criticism? A Second Opinion” (*Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 2, Winter 1999, 362-79), which was then countered by Gubar’s “Critical Response II: Notations in Medias Res” (*Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 2, Winter 1999, 380-96). The essays debate the need of feminist literary criticism and the future of feminist work. Hilger argues that the very existence of this debate illustrates that feminism is not yet “done,” and that feminist literary criticism is still necessary.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

overlooked voices. I am arguing that our first task lies in simply continuing to consider, teach, read, and evaluate the women writers known to us from their successful participation in the literary world of the past. Ruth-Ellen Joeres has contributed immensely to the scholarship on Louise Otto Peters. Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach has received the most attention of the here mentioned writers with her well-known works *Das Gemeindekind* and *Krambambuli*. Rosa Mayreder is better known in Austria, where the Rosa Mayreder College in Vienna continues to pay tribute to her influence and legacy, but she is perhaps the least researched of the three writers among North American Germanists. Despite their varying degrees of recognition today, all three inhabit a marginalized and specialized area of German scholarship that does not reach a majority audience. This is worth bearing in mind as we are, according to Hilger, once more on the cusp of reestablishing a national canon.

The past decade has seen tremendous changes in the printing and publishing industry of today. As more and more books are being converted to digital media, we are once again asserting what merits recognition and distribution and what will be left behind in the libraries of yore. As print media are being replaced by electronic media, canons are being rewritten; some works are selected to be preserved for future generations in a digital form while others are not. As a result, Hilger identifies the task of “post-feminism”<sup>26</sup> as providing canon critique and challenging our author-making industry. The author-making industry that, according to Hilger, appears to favor the same gender inequalities prevalent in our discipline’s past. With this dissertation, I aim to address this gender imbalance by focusing on women writers, who were once recognized for their

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 30.

intellectual contributions and who have become less studied and read in the new millenium. I investigate Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Otto Peters as voices writing back to the ethos and cultures of their time, the late nineteenth century.

In her analysis of eighteenth-century women writers, Hilger identifies a strategy of writing that she terms “writing back.” Hilger herself adopts the concept from post-colonial literature in which the colonized employ the tactics and strategies of the colonizers to respond to their domination in a way that garners their attention.<sup>27</sup> By using this rhetorical strategy, the colonized aim to prove that they, too, can master the same literary techniques as their aggressors. Hilger refers to this as borrowing or usurping the “master’s tools” to unhinge the “master’s house.”<sup>28</sup> She argues that the eighteenth-century women writers of her study employ the same techniques to demonstrate their ability to engage their literary adversaries rhetorically. In addition to proving themselves adept at wielding the same literary sword as their oppressors, women engaging in this kind of dialogue forge undeniable connections between the works with which they are engaging and the works they are themselves creating. Future readers are called to identify one text as being connected to the other through the undeniable links present in style, rhetoric, and form.

Hilger’s work is influential to my dissertation on two accounts. First, I agree with her argument regarding the role of feminist scholarship and its task in sustaining the visibility of past women writers, and second, I employ her concept of “writing back” although I adapt it to fit my research. I explore a similar type of dialogue – one of

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<sup>27</sup> Hilger adopts the term ‘writing back’ from the postcolonial theory most explicitly explored by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>28</sup> Hilger, 12.

“writing back” – that took place between the mass media and the well-published women writers of the nineteenth century. Although Mayreder, Otto Peters, and Ebner-Eschenbach did at times write direct responses to canonical works revered by their contemporaries, my focus is on a less overt “writing back” that took place. I am analyzing the works of Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Otto in terms of their engagement with topics and tropes important to their time, which are also to be found within the pages of the German fashion magazine, *Der Bazar*, aimed at presumably the same target audience. Hilger uses “writing back” as a way to draw connections between the women writers’ texts of her study and the canonical works those women were specifically referencing or addressing in their texts. I will be using the term “writing back” to describe the exchange between the women writers of my study and the increasingly dominant fashion industry and magazine culture with a particular focus on the German *Der Bazar*.

As already noted, the fashion industry’s increasing internationalism is made plain in *Der Bazar*. The German publication, however, chose to stray from the international agenda at times, signaling to the reader that certain ideas or ideologies were uniquely German. *Der Bazar* contributed to the formation of national identity during the late nineteenth century by promoting texts and images that not only defined womanhood and class, but more specifically, womanhood and class in a German nationalist context. The magazine’s writings for women were widely read as their distribution numbers can attest. Thus, it is worth investigating how writings by women such as Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach were responding to this discourse on gender and class as promoted by the popular fashion magazine industry of the time. In my analysis of women writers



“writing back,” I am interested in the responses issued (however indirectly) by the three above-named women writers to the discourse on gender, class, and mobility created by their contemporary public media aimed specifically at a female audience.

In my quest to extrapolate these ideas from the works of the aforementioned writers as well as from the pages of the three named magazines (with a particular focus on the German *Der Bazar*), I am conscious of the arguments put forth by William St Clair in his 2004 work, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*.<sup>29</sup> The author cautions against the desire to reconstruct a culture based on the reading materials published and distributed at a given time. He notes that texts are rarely read when they are first published. Some are only picked up and consumed much later. However, periodicals, by their very definition, are much more likely to be read and consumed at the time of their publication than other literary texts. Other types of texts – such as the traditional novel or canonical works – on which St Clair mainly focuses, are at times not read until long after their original date of publication; they are often rediscovered by generation after generation, remaining current despite being written centuries earlier. Reconstructing a reader based on the materials published at a given point is therefore a precarious and difficult task. It also overlooks the question of reader autonomy, which allows for readers to refuse certain works while choosing to read others. Reader autonomy, moreover, allows for readers to approach the works in a plethora of uncontrollable and unpredictable ways; a reader may only read certain passages, may skim others, may daydream, may argue and disagree with the narrative, may

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<sup>29</sup> See William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2004).

misunderstand, and may form an opinion that is entirely incongruous with the ideology of the text at hand.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, I do not attempt to reconstruct the reader of the late nineteenth century out of the pages of these magazines or the writings of the aforementioned authors. My aim is not to reconstruct the *recipients* of these texts, but rather to reconstruct the *ideas* that were shaped, presented, and distributed via writings for women or by women at the time. My work is interested in the exchange between the popular fashion magazines and the well-distributed women writers of the time as evident from their engagement with similar tropes and, in particular, with symbols and signs of women's physical, geographical, and social mobility. Before I proceed with my use of the term "mobility," a brief explanation of how I employ this term in regard to how it is frequently used in scholarship elucidates my goals for this dissertation.

## **VI. Defining the Term "Mobility"**

The term "mobility" is foremost employed in sociology for the tracking of movement from one social class to another (social mobility). American sociologist Anselm Strauss developed a theory of mobility in his 1971 work *The Contexts of Social Mobility*,<sup>31</sup> in which he outlined specific markers of mobility that track the

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<sup>30</sup> St. Clair's work focuses on reception theory and the ways an unmitigated study of readership and reception falls short into accounting for all the variables and contingencies of reading history. St. Clair further notes that a more accurate study of reception would include non-traditional objects of literary study such as personal letters, memoirs, journals, and personal writings that might have recorded reader responses to certain texts. Looking at publishing and distribution numbers alone paints a misguided picture of how readers responded to certain texts. It is for this reason that I am also including diary entries and memoirs into my study of Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach. An investigation of their responses to certain cultural phenomena would be lacking if it ignored their thoughts as posited in their personal writings in their journals, correspondence, or autobiographical works.

<sup>31</sup> See Anselm Strauss, *The Contexts of Social Mobility, Ideology and Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing

socioeconomic standing of an individual, a family, or a group. He establishes certain criteria by which collective or individual mobility can be traced and understood. His approach accounts for changes in social standing according to income, education, property, and professional recognition. Although Strauss published his theory in the 1970s – during the boom of feminism – his writings only account for women as appendages to men. While entire systems exist to track the social mobility of men, a woman's mobility is traced mainly according to her father's and her husband's status. In other words, a woman's mobility can be charted based on where she began her social standing (as daughter) to where she arrives at the end of her life (as married woman or widow). Hers is a passive mobility that is entirely contingent upon her father's or husband's rise or fall. Strauss' theory of social mobility presents an understanding of gender that is still surprisingly unchanged from the nineteenth-century perspective that understood women primarily in terms of their relation to the men governing them.

Mobility is not, however, limited to the tracking or social rise or decline. It has also been employed for the study of Diasporas and Immigration. Here, the term “mobility” is used in a lateral sense to refer to the traversing of space (the geographical mobility) of nomadic groups. Outside of sociology, where the focus is often on social mobility, this is how the term mobility is frequently employed in the humanities.

Last, mobility is also used to discuss the physical movement of the body. This comes closest to how I will be using the term “mobility” in my analysis of the body in motion during a specific time and place (nineteenth-century Germany and Austria) and by a specific group of people (middle and upper-class women). I also draw from aspects

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Co., 1971).

of the first two uses of the term in my study as I am interested in how female subjects' participation in the realm of physical mobility (sports, people-powered transport) overlapped with their social mobility and geographical location. In other words, I am interested in depictions – both visual and textual – of the *body in motion*. I look for examples of the specifically female body engaging in physical activities such as roller-skating, ice-skating, horseback riding, walking, dancing, swimming, or playing tennis. I also look for examples of the *suggestion* of the body in motion. Often, as mentioned above, female figures are depicted in outfits suggesting the pursuit of a particular physical activity without the activity actually being shown. Finally, I am also interested in depictions of objects that restrain and constrict the body, such as the corset, the crinoline, and the high-heeled shoe. Many of these depictions are easily found within the lithographs of the fashion magazines of the time but they are also present – albeit less explicitly – within the writings of the female writers mentioned above. They, too, in their act of “writing back,” reflect on how these everyday objects figured in the lives of women as mobile subjects. The following chapters will focus on different aspects of mobility each with a look at how the discourses surrounding that particular subject matter figured in the writings of the fashion magazines analyzed and as well as in the works by the aforementioned women writers.

Chapter one begins with an analysis of the fashion industry of the nineteenth-century. It traces the changing role of fashion as the vestimentary laws of the previous centuries were overturned and people were no longer forced to wear particular items based on their social status. Rather, as the fashion industry became supposedly democratized, clothing and accessories functioned to communicate class, gender, and

national belonging in a new way. Employing Philippe Perrot's theory of "sign values" and "use values," I analyze how fashion, print media, and culture intersect in a post-vestimentary laws nineteenth-century Europe. Chapter one also looks at how the fashion magazine industry operated on an international level, tracing the overlap in content and editorial structure between the German *Der Bazar*, the French *La Mode Illustrée*, and the American *Harper's Bazar*. An understanding of how the fashion industry and women's fashion magazines created an international discourse surrounding class and gender roles allows us better to recognize what set the German woman apart in her role as wife and mother as presented in *Der Bazar*.

Chapter two investigates the uniquely German presentation of domesticity and femininity as found in *Der Bazar*. The popular press played a key role in the dissemination of culture and the building of a national identity in Wilhelmine Germany, and *Der Bazar* offered its readership instruction on how to perform class and gender based on the cultural understanding of those categories in a specifically German-speaking context. Chapter two looks at how images of the German woman were presented in contrast to those of the non-German "Other" and investigates how imagined communities were created with the help of the popular press. Chapter two also introduces the voices of Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Louise Otto and their responses to the construction of the "German" woman in take of the popular press on class and idealized femininity.

Chapter three investigates the dialogue between the popular press as represented by the fashion magazine *Der Bazar* and the three aforementioned women writers on the subject of women's mobility through the lens of two popular women's fashion

accessories: the corset and the crinoline. Focusing on *physical* mobility, chapter three first presents a historical overview of these two fashion items (what they are and who they served), and then traces the discourses surrounding the use of the corset and the crinoline in *Der Bazar* and the women's texts.

Chapter four applies a similar reading with the focus on *geographical* mobility examining the discourses surrounding the shoe and the horsewoman in *Der Bazar* and the texts of Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach as a point of entry.

Chapter five then looks at the concept of *social* mobility as it was presented in *Der Bazar* and in the works of fiction and non-fiction by Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach. Both the fashion magazine and the women writers focused on education and women's access to professional training as a vehicle for social mobility. Chapter five provides a brief overview on the state of women's education in the mid to late nineteenth century and then analyzes how the fashion magazine and the women writers presented the topic with regard to the construction of an idealized and uniquely German understanding of nineteenth-century femininity.

## **Chapter One: Nineteenth-Century Fashion and Magazine Culture on an International Playing Field**

### **I. Nineteenth-Century Fashion: Function, Sign, and Relational Values**

During the nineteenth-century, the growing fashion industry and women's fashion magazines began operating on an international playing field. Growing industrialization and free market economies boosted the production of reading material and the dissemination of fashion culture to an international plateau. As a result, questions of class, gender, and national identity were also increasingly influenced by the international discourse formed on these topics. With this chapter, I will first analyze the role of the nineteenth-century fashion industry within the larger context of growing industrialization, international trade, and free market economies characterizing Western nations at the time. More specifically, I investigate how matters of gender, class, and identity were shaped by the fashion industry and presented to the readership of three different national fashion magazines from a perspective that was increasingly influenced by sharing of ideas on an international level.

My analysis of the nineteenth-century fashion landscape must begin with a contextualization of the fashion industry and fashion practices of this time. One of the key events that changed the role of fashion and clothing during the nineteenth century was the removal of vestimentary laws at the end of the eighteenth century. Prior to this, vestimentary laws<sup>32</sup> – a set of state implemented rules and regulations – dictated what people could wear based on class, occupation, and rank. For instance, the working classes

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<sup>32</sup> See Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Vestimentary laws are also referred to as sumptuary laws in some texts. For the sake of consistency, I will use the term 'vestimentary laws' for the remainder of this chapter even when the original source termed them 'sumptuary laws.'

were prohibited from wearing the rich and bold hues associated with the aristocracy<sup>33</sup> and were restricted to drab browns and black.<sup>34</sup> Certain headwear or accessories (the apron, the delicate glove) could also signal a distinct class belonging. According to fashion historian Philippe Perrot, clothing performed a “sociopolitical function,”<sup>35</sup> communicating at once rank, power, lineage, and profession. It signaled “self-affirmation” for some and “subordination” for others.<sup>36</sup> A breach in clothing regulations could be punished as severely or as mildly as the context deemed worthy; the consequences of vestimentary transgressions ranged from “mere ridicule” to “legal penalties.”<sup>37</sup>

Clothing not only functioned to enforce and make visible existing social hierarchies; it also served to distinguish among nations and cultures. One could easily differentiate an upper class German woman from her social equal in France by means of the vestimentary cues provided. For instance, the German aristocrat of the late

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<sup>33</sup> See Carl Köhler, *A History of Costume* (Dover Publications, 1963), 289. The French king Louis XIII, for instance, prohibited anyone but kings and princes from wearing gold embroidery on lapels, cuffs, and caps.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See John Peacock, *Kostüm und Mode – das Bildhandbuch, Von den frühen Hochkulturen bis zur Gegenwart*. trans. Heike Rosbath and Diethard H. Klein (Bern: Verlag Haupt, 1991). 15. During seventeenth-century Prussia, for instance, German peasant women wore white caps with a broad folded rim and an apron over their full dress skirts to signal their regional and class belonging. Vestimentary laws signaled with clear and public markers where each individual belonged. Some rules applied across international lines; peasants usually wore items of plain and sturdy fabrics in solid colors while members of the upper classes wore lavish and elaborate garments with patterns in rich, bold hues. While the seventeenth-century Prussian peasant woman wore her plain dress with apron and emblematic white head covering, the Austrian queen wore an elaborately patterned dress of sumptuous materials and accessorized with delicate gloves and costly jewelry. Despite regional or national deviations, the overall adherence to a vestimentary code supported by the laws of the time made it easy to discern class and gender belonging at a glance.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 6.



seventeenth century would be distinguishable from her French or Italian counterpart through her coiffure, choice of headdress, and even, to the more discerning eye, the cut and shape of her dress.<sup>38</sup> These vestimentary rules continued to dictate apparel throughout the eighteenth century, during which time garments continued to speak for their wearer in profound depth and detail. The choice of cut, cloth, accessories, and adornments could signal as much as age, nationality, estate, financial standing, an adherence to or rejection of moral and social codes, and, finally, the ability to play the social game of appearances. Both men and women adhered to this system albeit with recognition of the different rules applying to their gendered spheres. Then, after centuries of perfecting this system, the French government abolished its vestimentary laws on October 29, 1793, with a decree that proclaimed,

No person of either sex can force any citizen, male or female, to dress in a way, under penalty of being considered a suspect, treated as such, and prosecuted as a disturber of the peace; everyone is free to wear the garment or garb suitable to his or her sex that he or she pleases.<sup>39</sup>

Soon, the other European nations followed suit and men and women of all classes were free to wear the garments and colors of their choice. Clothing was no longer to be enforced through a top-down system of regulations as markers for social and economic belonging. Rules still applied to the gendered use of garments in keeping with traditionally sanctioned wear for men and women (i.e., cross-dressing was still illegal), but outside of gender regulations and various dress codes closely tied to certain professions (i.e., legal, clerical, etc), men and women were free to explore their vestimentary preferences if they had the money to do so.

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<sup>38</sup> Peacock, 120.

<sup>39</sup> Perrot, 20.

This newly gained sartorial freedom, however, paved the way for a fashion industry that preyed on exactly those newly abdicated rules as a way to sell the wealthy garments announcing their privileged status and to seduce the bourgeoisie with perceived social mobility. Removing vestimentary laws did not remove the careful analysis of clothing as language; rather it had precisely the opposite effect. Now, more than ever, garments were carefully selected for their ability to communicate wealth and social status. Conspicuous consumption found its place in a fashion industry designed to communicate and signal much more than perform or provide. In other words, the moment fashion was supposedly democratized, it became all the more classist, exclusionary, and communicative.

Fashion historian Diane Crane writes about the supposed democratization of nineteenth-century Europe in her work *Fashion and Its Social Agendas*. Crane applies Georg Simmel's theory on "fashion diffusion" versus "fashion democratization" to a post-vestimentary laws Europe, arguing that the former rather than the latter continued to dominate the fashion landscape of the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> According to Crane, the "democratization thesis" argues that after the repeal of vestimentary laws, class differences, as communicated through clothing and physical adornments, are eliminated. The "diffusion theory" by contrast maintains that class differences continue to be signaled by clothing due to a market production that provides buyers with styles "created for the elites."<sup>41</sup> Crane maintains that despite changes in regulations regarding clothing and who could or could not have access to specific garments and styles, there was little

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<sup>40</sup> Diane Crane. *Fashion and Its Social Agendas. Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 29.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

“democratization” taking place in nineteenth-century Europe and much more of what she terms “fashion diffusion.”<sup>42</sup> She amends Simmel’s<sup>43</sup> original theory to note that the process of dissemination taking place was not strictly a top-down one but rather a more nuanced one in which certain styles were co-opted while others were not. Despite these qualifications, Crane maintains that the democratization process that presumably followed the removal of vestimentary laws was slow and fraught at best, leaving age-old notions about clothing and class in place.

To explain how clothing continued to signal class and lineage, Perrot offers a semiotic analysis of nineteenth-century fashion trends in Europe. He introduces the terms “use-values” and “sign-values”<sup>44</sup> to explain the role of fashion in a post-vestimentary laws world. Garments not only carry use-values (their functionality) but also – and most importantly – sign-values. The latter is the abstract quality of a garment that signals information about its owner such as level of income, class belonging, age, and occupation. Take, for instance, the white glove worn by upper class women in the nineteenth century. Its use-value is minimal as this item is more decorative than functional. The ubiquitous light-colored glove worn by many noblewomen and middle class women of the time carried primarily its sign-value. It suggested to the viewer that the wearer was wealthy and well-situated enough not to engage in any physical activity that might soil or damage such a delicate item. As Perrot notes, “because elegance is an important symbolic prize, clothing becomes a field for rivalry in every society with some

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>43</sup> See Georg Simmel, “Fashion,” *International Quarterly* 10 (1904): 130-155. <http://www.modetheorie.de>.

<sup>44</sup> Perrot, 9.

mobility, some possibility of wanting what others desire.”<sup>45</sup> In nineteenth-century Prussia, where the socio-political landscape was in a state of change after the 1848 revolutions,<sup>46</sup> garments and their sign-values were one of the primary ways with which members of the different classes could signal or *pretend* status and class belonging.

The ability of this duality in clothing both to signal and pretend status and wealth made fashion all the more relevant after the abolition of the vestimentary laws. In her essay, “The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Discourse,” Mariana Valverde demonstrates how fashion fueled class anxiety in the literature of the nineteenth century. This was particularly the case with female figures that were shown to use clothing not only to hide certain bodily attributes, but also to “masquerade” as a member of a higher class.<sup>47</sup> Valverde points to examples in the novels of the time that reveal a fear of “fallen women,” who used clothing to pretend a status above their own and to “masquerade as virtuous wives of working men.”<sup>48</sup> The language of fashion was thus a complicated one that was not only used to tell the “truth” but also to lie and manipulate the beholder into perceiving a truth more advantageous to the wearer.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>46</sup> The 1848 revolutions were a series of uprisings throughout Europe that originated in France and then picked up momentum in the German speaking nations of Austria and Prussia as well. They were largely fueled by class conflict and the desire of the lower and middle classes to rebel against the authority and tyranny of the ruling classes. For more, see Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress. A New History of the German People*. NY: Harper Collins, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Mariana Valverde, “The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Discourse,” *Fashion: Critical and Primary Sources. The Nineteenth Century. Vol. 3*. Ed. Peter McNeil (New York: Berg, 2009), 158.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Valverde terms this the “simultaneous stability and instability of dress.”<sup>49</sup> Sign-values were not as easily read or as straight-forward as Perrot’s system might imply.

The use of sign values to pretend belonging was, however, not merely limited to class and lineage. In her work *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women’s Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, historian Carol Mattingly looks at how women of the nineteenth century picked up on the function of what Perrot terms sign-values in order strategically to navigate the male-dominated realm of politics and public speaking. Mattingly focuses on women orators and their tactical use of clothing to achieve political and social goals in the often-unwelcoming public realm. She describes the hostile environment confronting women speakers during a time when women were not supposed to have an oratory presence. Mattingly argues that dress was thus carefully selected and used by women orators to gain acceptance into a previously inaccessible domain.

Strategies ranged from adopting traditional Quaker dress, in an attempt to appeal to traditionalists and moralists, or radical reform dress, so as to convey an air of change and modernity. In all cases, women consciously used clothing as a way to make an impression and to be heard. Their dress became part of the rhetoric used and sometimes even the rhetoric itself, communicating more than their words alone could do. For example, Mattingly notes, “the most impressive women rhetors effected a ‘womanly’ stance to disarm critics who accused them of being ‘unsexed’ and to assuage a public that feared a danger to family and society. These rhetors nonetheless clearly understood the performative value associated with their bodily presentation.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, these

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Carol Mattingly, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women’s Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), xv.

women knowingly and strategically employed the communicative functions of fashion. They capitalized on the sign-values of their garments and used them to supplement their oratory presence.

Even if the nineteenth-century women orators had preferred to ignore the symbolic nature of clothing, the media would not let them forget it. When women speakers appeared in public, subsequent newspaper and magazine coverage focused on their appearance and looks as much as – if not more so – than on their words and message. For example, American writer and columnist Fanny Fern wrote in her article “Lady Lecturers” in the *New York Ledger* on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1870: “Can anybody tell me why reporters, in making mention of a lady speaker, always consider it to be necessary to report, fully and *firstly*, the dresses worn by them?”<sup>51</sup> Mattingly argues that “gender, inscribed on and around women’s bodies, was constructed largely in the visual impact created by their clothing and appearance”<sup>52</sup> and that gender also specifically aligned groups with given spaces: women with the domestic and men with the public. Seeing women and the visual effect of their femininity in a space not appropriate to their gender provided a shock factor that could not go unremarked by the media.<sup>53</sup> Thus, navigating these new territories did not come without recognition of the paradoxes involved in

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1. Emphasis in original.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Mattingly, 14-15. Mattingly provides examples with a sampling of headlines that were used to report of women orators, each one making reference to a feminine-coded garment and vestige of the body: “Petticoats and Pantaloon,” “A Female in Breeches,” “A Female in Pantaloon,” “Corset-Strings and Suffrage,” “The Corseted Crusade,” “Politicians in Petticoats,” “A Bustline Army of Crusaders,” and “Petticoats at the Bar.” Although Mattingly’s example stem from a North American context, as this chapter demonstrates, the rhetoric used to discuss femininity and fashion operated beyond national lines and the arguments made by Mattingly regarding the conscious use of fashion by women in the public eye is relevant to an understanding of how fashion worked within a European context as well.

participating in this gender matrix. Women “had to simultaneously turn down the level of the body to assume the subject position of man and also turn up the level of the body to reassure the [audience] that the body was aligned as a woman’s body should be aligned socially within the matrix of reproduction and nurturing”<sup>54</sup> As Mattingly explains, women struggled both to transcend a bodily presence that distracted from their intellectual contributions while realizing that a strategic use of that physical presentation would gain them entry and acceptance by assuaging social fears and mollifying aggressors.

What differentiates Mattingly’s writings from Perrot is her focus on the reception of the sign-values of clothing and the play between wearer and viewer. While Perrot’s identification of sign-value and use-value is useful in establishing a framework for understanding fashion, his reliance on this binary system inhibits a more nuanced understanding of the relational aspects of clothing. The sign-value and use-value system falls flat when we consider the many ways in which clothing works to manipulate perceptions as described by Mattingly in her work on women orators. Mattingly’s work shows how reception plays a significant role in the deployment of fashion as a semiotic tool while also allowing that this type of communication is marked by a level of unpredictability and uncontrollability – the wearer can only speculate how the viewer will accept and adopt the message of the garments presented. The wearer cannot control more than the intentionality and hope that the viewer engages and accepts the rhetoric of the clothing in a way that complies with his or her objective. Mattingly’s contribution to the scholarship on nineteenth-century fashion begs us to consider the relational aspect that

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 14.

accompanies the use of clothing at a time when gender and class roles were in flux and being challenged and redefined on a regular basis.

In the end, these changes in how fashion was perceived were the result of several historical shifts that enabled the above described semiotic system to come into being. These changes required, as noted, the greater sartorial freedom that followed removal of vestimentary laws, and they coincided with a radical shift in class and gender performance as industrialization was changing the socioeconomic make-up of Germany and much of Europe. They also required technological advances such as the invention of the sewing machine, the introduction of ready-made clothing and department stores, and an increasing shift towards free trade and a market economy. As the following section demonstrates, all these events came together in the nineteenth century to change how the apparatus of fashion was used to communicate the personal, the social, the socioeconomic, and the (inter)national.

## **II. Fashion, Technology, and Internationalism**

In addition to the above outlined factors, technological advances and a growing market industry made it possible for the fashion industry to expand exponentially. As already stated, the ready-made clothing industry did not exist prior to the late nineteenth century. The invention of the sewing machine,<sup>55</sup> the advent of the department store, the

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<sup>55</sup> See Grace Rogers Cooper, *The Invention of the Sewing Machine* (Smithsonian, 1968). The first sewing machine patent is credited to British inventor Thomas Saint in 1791. But mass produced sewing machines intended for home purchase did not come about until the mid nineteenth century. Much like with the history of the printing press, the sewing machine's development cannot be attributed to one particular country or inventor. It took innovations from Germany, Austria, France, Britain and America to bring about the modern sewing machine – a portable design intended for home use and the personal production of garments and stitched goods. This type of sewing machine entered the market place in the 1850s, at a time when increasing numbers of manufacturer appeared, resulting in what was dubbed “The sewing machine wars.”



proliferation of inexpensive ready-mades, and the prescriptive nature of fashion magazines meant that clothing circulated in new ways: it was to be quickly obtained, quickly devoured, and just as quickly discarded for the latest trends. Although department stores were widely criticized as gathering places for the poor and the indecent, their popularity outweighed any slander. By the end of the nineteenth century, department stores were a mainstay of most major European cities. Perrot explains,

The middle class shopped at department stores in great numbers, but the stores sought to attract customers from the opposite poles of the bourgeoisie by appealing to both the affluent and the penurious. Thus they enlarged the departments of luxury goods as well as those of ordinary articles, multiplied both the promotions of new fashions and the sales to liquidate them.<sup>56</sup> (66)

In other words, department stores, like fashion magazines, relied on strategies that both promoted the latest trends and then quickly made them obsolete. On a national level, the market economy drove profit through the practice of production of goods, replacement thereof with something “better,” and the constant repetition of this cycle. Trends lived for a short and limited time, conspicuous consumption became the *leitmotif* of the latter half of the nineteenth century, and profit was derived through constant flux and change.

Perrot points to the repetition used to maintain this fast-paced momentum of trends. He notes that there are only so many shapes and colors that can be employed to construct fashion and those few limited selections are simply recycled in new and innovative combinations to give the appearance of change.<sup>57</sup> Thus, styles were not

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<sup>56</sup> Perrot, 66.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 24. Perrot cites Agnes B. Young as classifying the shapes of fashion into three categories based on “contour”: bustled, tubular, and bell-shaped. According to Young, over two hundred years of fashion can be deconstructed into these three categories. All styles can be labeled as fitting either one of these contours and fashion trends simply reuse and reintroduce combinations of these three shapes over and over. Noteworthy, however, is that they never symbolize the same things twice. While the same limited number

changing all that much each year but the market economy and the fashion industry profited from presenting the semblance of constant change, with fashion magazines, as I will demonstrate, enforcing and promoting that illusion. This phenomenon became increasingly ritualized, eventually finding a rhythm that benefited both producers and wealthy consumers. Perrot writes,

To accelerate production while moving a large volume rapidly, and to increase demand, it was necessary to limit the physical life of a garment (built-in obsolescence of its use-value) and its social life (built-in obsolescence of its sign-value). Fashion rhythms thus became institutionalized so that the official changes occurred annually and seasonally.<sup>58</sup>

The rhythmic and determined schedule of fashion changes suited those wealthy enough to participate in this social game and those who needed a venue for their conspicuous consumption. This artificial acceleration of fashion's mobility translated, however, to a decline in quality and attention to detail. Perrot explains that clothes were no longer being made to last a generation or longer just as they were no longer being purchased with the idea of durability and longevity in mind. Even the lower classes, who could previously only afford a limited number of items of clothing that were made to last for as long as possible, could benefit from the throw-away nature of fashion's new era. Fripperies<sup>59</sup> and second-hand furnishers made the discarded garments of the upper classes available to the lower classes at reasonable prices. Initially, this was a slow process with the aristocracy

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of shapes are recycled into yearly fashion trends, the meaning and symbolism assigned to them has to change with each use in order to stay relevant and novel.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>59</sup> Fripperies were the predecessors to modern day consignment shops. They obtained their goods by purchasing them from down on their luck women, who had to secretly sell family goods and expensive gowns to supplement their family income. The fripperies would then resell these items to women also looking to appear wealthier by buying items well above their means in a clandestine manner. Today, the term frippery is archaic and more commonly used to denote embellishments, or something of ostentatious elegance.

retaining their garments for much longer before being willing to part with them. As ready-made clothing decreased in quality, as items fell apart more quickly, and as the fashion media promoted the adherence to a constantly changing set of style rules, the upper classes became increasingly willing to participate in this fast-paced exchange and to discard their old for the new. Perrot argues that this pace of fashion mobility came wholly imposed from the outside, from a growing market economy and from businesses seeking to profit at the individual's expense.<sup>60</sup> He cautions against interpreting this "accelerated mobility of signs" as "real social mobility."<sup>61</sup>

Perrot's analysis of the fashion industry as influenced by market trends presents an interesting and well-conceptualized understanding of how prevailing business practices of the nineteenth century intersected with fashion and the tempo of trends. It assumes, however, an intrinsically base quality to market-driven societies and to the results of industrialization. Perrot evokes Marxist ideology in his criticism of the fashion industry as driven by profit and expansion at the supposed cost of the individual. His cautionary tone, moreover, recalls the foreboding mood of realist novels at the end of the nineteenth century, novels that deplore the city and the characteristics of an urban industrialized society, which values the machine over the human and the anonymous over the personalized.

Perrot is right to point to the artificial nature of fashion's momentum as driven largely by a market economy seeking profit and growth. He, however, understands this as a negative phenomenon that victimized the individual. Perrot's line of reasoning assumes that the consumer is without agency and powerless against the vagaries of the industry. It

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<sup>60</sup> Perrot, 184.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 183.

also assumes that, alternatively, there would be some sort of gain from having the sartorial freedom that might possibly exist in a culture devoid of a fashion industry or a capitalist economy. Perrot's approach does not allow for the reading of fashion as a tool used consciously by individuals to perform and enact an identity, as did the women orators presented by Mattingly. Perrot's argument also does not allow for the potential for change that can come from mimicking certain phenomena. To use a cliché, one could argue for the "fake it until you make it" idiom to explain what could happen in a society where fashion and sartorial mobility pave the way for actual class and gender mobility. In other words, even if the fashion industry of the nineteenth century presented a false illusion of social mobility through the constant overturn of symbols and signs, it could, however unintentionally, have paved the way for real social mobility. Through performance, the possibility of a given scenario becomes increasingly more real. While such realization may not happen, it seems premature to criticize the fast-paced mobility of fashion as an illusionary trap fooling individuals into believing that social mobility is happening on a larger scale.

While these were the events influencing fashion and its semiotic function on a more local level, other factors were changing the way the industry operated on an international level. As already noted, the nineteenth century was a time of rapid economic growth in international trade. Many European countries were promoting international collaborations through the exchange of goods and ideas. Wolfram Kaiser, in his article on cultural transfer and free trade at the world fairs, terms this concept "protoglobalization."<sup>62</sup> He argues that the time period between 1880 and 1914 saw a

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<sup>62</sup> Wolfram Kaiser, "Cultural Transfer of Free Trade at the World Exhibitions, 1851-1862," *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (2005): 563.

marked increase in “world trade in relation to production,”<sup>63</sup> arguing that world trade surpassed at great speed what had previously taken place. He credits industrialization and the vast improvements to transport infrastructures for making this possible. Kaiser suggests that Britain was at the forefront of this movement, eager to engage in free trade with other developed nations to boost its own economy. Britain’s desire to promote free trade at the time when this was still a novel concept spurred the creation of the first world exhibition in London in 1851. The Great Exhibition aimed to bring together leading business and political figures of all nations to engage in an exchange of goods and ideas and to spark future collaborations and trade agreements.

The Great Exhibition took place in the newly constructed Crystal Palace, a large hall built specifically for the purpose of the fair. Nations showcased their best goods, such as luxury products from France, toys from Stuttgart, and porcelain from Meissen.<sup>64</sup> Although some feared that the exhibition was simply a way for Britain to display its industrial and economic prowess, many critics and journalists left commending the fair and applauding its visionary goals. Initially, the Great Exhibition was received with mixed reactions from the different countries participating. But just as journalists turned towards favorable accounts of the fair, many participating business leaders came quickly to realize the potential of Britain’s vision for an international market place. Michel Chevalier, French economist and one of the country’s leading advocates for free trade, saw it as a irrefutable argument against France’s “policy of isolation”<sup>65</sup> which would

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 577.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 581.

greatly harm its economic standing by leaving France out of the growing trade market developed by its neighboring countries. Similarly, German steel manufacturer Alfred Krupp recognized the earning potential of expanding to an international market and attended the fair promoting his business.<sup>66</sup> Over 60,000 foreign visitors made the journey from their countries to London to attend the fair, and they were not disappointed. Overall, even skeptics who wanted to protect the integrity of their national industries had to admit that industry was moving towards an international playing field and that keeping up meant entering the fray.

The Great Exhibition thus demonstrates how large-scale and multifaceted cultural transfer became during the latter half of the nineteenth century, both on a practical and ideological level. Ideas and material goods circulated increasingly on an international level and operated beyond national borders to bring different cultures and profit-seeking industries together. The fashion industry was at the forefront of this movement as an avid participant at The Great Exhibition in London, showcasing the latest Parisian trends to middle and upper class consumers only too eager to exchange money for the sign-values of the garments on display. In the above-named article, Kaiser argues for looking at what has traditionally been termed “low brow” cultural artifacts for an understanding of how culture and ideology were promoted and exchanged during the nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup> While previous studies of cultural transfer between different nations tended to focus on aspects of “high culture,” Kaiser argues that a wealth of information is to be found by studying the quotidian. This revised approach to the traditional study of cultural transfer

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 574.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 568.

looks at the role of mass and popular culture in creating national and international ideologies.<sup>68</sup> Kaiser's understanding of cultural transfer with its focus on "low brow" cultural artifacts aligns with my focus on fashion magazines as the lens through which to study the discourses surrounding gender, class, and national identity. His writings on the growing internationalism of the nineteenth century and the increasing transfer of ideas as exemplified by The Great Exhibition in London further underline the argument of my work; the cultural exchange of ideas during the latter half of the nineteenth century took place on an international level and operated beyond the physical borders of any geographical location, resulting from the technological and industrial advancements that made collaborations on such a broad scale possible. The following section outlines my approach in using fashion magazines as a medium of study as well as shows how I position my work in the context of past scholarship on the popular press and, more specifically, on publications aimed at women.

### **III. Magazine Analysis and Methodology**

Before I turn to a more in-depth examination of *Der Bazar*, *La Mode Illustrée*, and *Harper's Bazar*, I offer a summary of how past scholarship has approached the medium of women's magazines. Then I will explain how I position my analysis of this medium in terms of past approaches and methodologies. The study of women's magazines is relatively new, and much of the scholarship conducted on women's magazines has come out of feminist literary criticism. Women's magazines as an object of study gained unprecedented attention in the 1960s within the second wave feminist movement. It is not surprising that materials and products for women underwent

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

newfound scrutiny at a time when women's rights and women's issues were at the forefront of political movements. Self-proclaimed feminists such as Betty Friedan, who approached these texts from a second wave feminist perspective, carried out the majority of the scholarship on women's magazines.

Sociologist Anna Gough-Yates, author of *Understanding Women's Magazines. Publishing, Markets and Readership*, notes in her extensive study of women's magazines that early scholarship had a very specific tone. Influenced by the climate of the second wave feminist movement, feminist scholars tended to focus on how women's magazines were used as a tool for patriarchal oppression and the proliferation of unrealistic images of idealized womanhood. Thus, Friedan and feminist scholars writing in the same vein, approached women's magazines as closed texts promoting a specific ideology and message. They did not account for multiple readings, but rather interpreted what they saw as a monolithic producer of meaning. They read women's magazines as closed systems offering a set message; generally one that promoted a type of femininity counter to the aims of the women's movement as they understood it. Gough-Yates argues that early feminist studies of women's magazines produced a singular and one-sided outcome: "The women's magazines industry [was] understood as . . . a monolithic meaning-producer, circulating magazines that contain[ed] 'messages' and 'signs' about the nature of femininity that serve to promote and legitimate dominant interests."<sup>69</sup>

In claiming that the messages within these magazines promoted a type of femininity that was unrealistic and harmful to women, feminists arguing under the second wave rubric fell into the trap of constructing a counter-femininity that they deemed the

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<sup>69</sup> Anna Gough-Yates, *Understanding Women's Magazines. Publishing, Markets and Readerships* (NY: Routledge, 2003), 7.



“real” and “natural” version contrary to the media-imposed magazine one. This dichotomy of the “real” woman versus her artificial magazine counterpart relied on essentialist arguments about a woman’s supposed “natural” identity and “true” way of being. Thus, Yates argues that these early feminist methodologies presented only partial and somewhat naïve explorations of these texts, approaching the medium through too narrow a perspective tinged with their own ideologies and scholarly agendas.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1980s, feminist scholarship adopted aspects of post-structuralism and post-modernism, especially inspired by the writings of Michel Foucault, and began arguing “that the meanings of women’s magazines – or indeed any other form of culture – were not pre-existent messages waiting to be ‘discovered’ by the researcher.”<sup>71</sup> The turn to a postmodernist reading of texts led scholars to include studies on the reader and recipient of print matter. Feminist scholars focusing on women’s magazines were now concerned with the “dialogical”<sup>72</sup> relationship between reader and text and allowed for more than one privileged way of reading. This gave way to the methodologies of the 1990s, which focused far more on the production of magazine content. Magazines were no longer understood as closed texts producing a singular and pre-determined message to the reader but rather as “interdiscursive”<sup>73</sup> spaces that allowed for a reader, a product, and an industry that brought these two together.

Not only did the reader begin to play a more significant role in the analysis of magazines as a medium, this construct also gained significant consideration in the

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 16.

creation of magazines as product. Gough-Yates cites Angela McRobbie's 1996 study as definitive of the scholarship of the 1990s in demonstrating how makers of magazines all focused on "the reader" as a concrete and definable consumer. Market researchers, editors, writers, and publishers all spoke of "the reader" as a real and tangible entity, creating a perfectly discernable consumer profile. Gough-Yates writes, "this profile could be offered to existing and prospective advertisers, demonstrating that the magazine was keeping its finger on the pulse of young women's culture."<sup>74</sup> Thus, the reader, once entirely ignored, now gained considerable recognition from both literary critics and magazine producers.

Although McRobbie notes that this "reader" changed over time to reflect changes in social demands, the problem with creating a reader profile such as this one lies in the assumption that there is at any given time such a thing as a universal female reader. While marketers and advertisers might have profited from the creation of an imaginary reader that could represent the spectrum of women purchasing a given magazine, literary critics recognized that no real-life equivalent of such a singular construct existed. As Caroline Oates points out in her 1999 study of women's magazines, the idea that a magazine is writing for and catering to a particular (definable) reader is an illusion created as a "gimmick"<sup>75</sup> by the publishing industry in order to give customers the impression that their voice factors into the production of the consumer good being sold to them. In general, studies on magazines undertaken during the 1990s, focused on this

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 18.

dialectic between customer and product, exploring the idea of the illusionary reader and its role in the marketing and publishing world.<sup>76</sup>

My own methodology in approaching these women's magazines is influenced by these later studies of the medium in that I investigate both the text – by undertaking close readings of words and images – and the context and production practices surrounding the finished product. I am not approaching these magazines as the closed systems that earlier scholarship assumed them to be. I do account for a reader and recipient but I also diverge from later analytical approaches in that I do not posit one type of reader or consumer; nor do I attempt to offer a sampling of possible reader types as a way to reconcile the problematic profiling of a consumer audience.

While I allow for the role of the reader in my analysis, my methodology is further influenced by the writings of William St Clair. In *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, St Clair argues that reception theory tends to give too much credit to the idea that a reader can be reconstructed by looking at the specific reading material of a given time period.<sup>77</sup> According to his theory, books are not always read and appreciated at the time of their publication. While some texts gain instant reader appreciation, others do not become mainstream until much past the time when first appearing on the market. Moreover, even if one could match a reader with a given text, it is still impossible to know how that individual consumed the work given that readers have a certain degree of autonomy that cannot be predicted or calculated. As noted in the introduction of my dissertation, readers may only read certain passages, may skim others, may daydream,

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> See William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2004.

may argue and disagree with the narrative, may misunderstand, and may form an opinion that is entirely incongruous with the ideology of the text at hand.

If the reader is almost entirely unpredictable, then why allow for the recognition of the reader in the first place? Because recognizing that a reader – no matter how elusive and indefinable – does exist allows for an understanding of a text as an open system engaged in a dialogue with the context and culture of its creation. Thus, when I am investigating the idea of an implied reader as present in the pages of the magazines of my study, I am interested in highlighting the discursive construction of a reader within a given culture and economy of production. This discursive creation of a reader allows for greater insight into the assumptions and understandings of what constituted a female reading audience during the nineteenth century. The following section will analyze three nineteenth-century fashion magazines of German, French, and American origin respectively, focusing on the content as well as the context and intended readership of each publication.

#### **IV. *Der Bazar, Illustrirte Damen-Zeitung*: An Impetus for Conspicuous Consumption**

*Der Bazar, Illustrirte Damen-Zeitung* was founded in 1855 in Berlin by the Louis Schaeffer Verlag and published weekly. The magazine's subtitle "*Illustrirte Damen-Zeitung*" (illustrated women's magazine) establishes that this publication was aimed at a female reading audience and that it employed the latest technologies in using images in addition to text. Although *Der Bazar* was well distributed and popular at the time of its publication, little research has been done on this magazine. Of the three publications considered in this dissertation, *Der Bazar* has the least amount of scholarly research

dedicated to it, appearing only in one extensive study on women's magazines conducted by Andreas Graf, to which I will return shortly. It is perhaps its subject matter of fashion and women's domestic lives that has dissuaded scholars from paying much attention to this magazine, as these topics have often been dismissed as trivial and inconsequential to "serious" historical studies. But as many scholars have argued before me,<sup>78</sup> the study of popular culture and the artifacts of everyday life contributes to the understanding and rethinking of a historical time period. In this vein my dissertation seeks to add to the scholarship on nineteenth-century mass media and cultural production by examining a much overlooked, yet at the time widely read, women's magazine.

To begin an analysis of *Der Bazar*, it is useful to consider the masthead that symbolized the publication as a whole. The masthead featured the name of the magazine in large letters embedded within garlands of ivy, flowers, and overgrown leaves. In the capital letters "D" and "B," small but intricate figures depict the ethos of the magazine; a young woman sits in the "D" and a rotund and jovial looking cherub rests in the letter "B." The young woman represents the imagined reader of *Der Bazar*, while the cherub hints at Western ideals of love, babies, and motherhood.

While the cherub remained consistent throughout the decades of publication, the image of the young woman underwent significant changes with each decade. At the beginning of the publication's run, in the 1850s, the female image faced to the left and held a large journal or magazine, presumably a copy of *Der Bazar* itself. This image of a girl reading remained throughout the 1860s. Slight changes were made, but the general

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<sup>78</sup> In addition to St Clair, Perrot, Mattingly, and Gough-Yates already mentioned and cited in this study, there are many other well received scholars who have argued for the inclusion of 'trivial' or 'low brow' materials into analyses of a culture and place. For more, see Roland Barthe's *The Fashion System* (1967) and Georg Simmel, "Fashion," *International Quarterly* 10 (1904), 130-155.

idea remained the same; the girl appears to be of a young age, she wears an elegant yet simple dress, her hair is styled in the fashion of the period, and she appears to be reclining on a pillow or chaise while looking through a magazine. The large format of her reading material and the barely visible images on the front cover indicates that it is likely *Der Bazar* that she is holding.

During the 1870s, the image of the reading girl takes on a different look. She is no longer holding a magazine but is now facing in the other direction and looking towards a gilded mirror. Her hands grasp the edges of her veil, which she is inspecting. Her hair is elaborately coiffed around her headpiece and her dress is ornately decorated with lace trimmings, a corseted bodice, and three strings of pearls.

The following decade's image continues in this vein once more in showing a woman in opulent dress. Like her 1870s counterpart, she is holding a fashion accessory rather than reading material and is once more facing to the right. In her right hand, she holds a large opened fan and enough of her body is made visible to showcase her small corseted waist and large skirt bustle supported by a crinoline. Thus, by the 1880s, the female figure pictured in the masthead transformed from a simple girl reading a magazine to an elaborately dressed woman surrounded by accoutrements of fashion and beauty. The changes to the masthead thus reflected a change in the magazine's focus during its publication time, which in turn coincided with wider socioeconomic developments in Germany and Europe during that time. I will return to these developments in more depth after establishing the profile of this publication.

Early issues of *Der Bazar* included recipes, music scores, and a broad spectrum of household-focused articles. As time went by, more and more illustrations depicting

fashion and the latest trends dominated each issue and an increasing amount of space was granted to fashion illustrations, sewing patterns, and the purchasing of goods. Andreas Graf, in his study *Die Ursprünge der modernen Medienindustrie: Familien- und Unterhaltungszeitschriften der Kaiserzeit (1870-1918)*,<sup>79</sup> writes that that *Modezeitungen* (fashion magazines) – under which he categorizes *Der Bazar* – were initially only concerned with the “Bekleidung und Schönheitspflege bürgerlicher Damen” (dress and beauty care of bourgeois women) but that near the end of the nineteenth century, a “Wandel der klassischen Modezeitschrift zum Hausfrauenblatt” (a turn from the classic fashion magazine to a magazine for homemakers) ensued.<sup>80</sup> This change from a fashion magazine to one more broadly encompassing the household is characterized by articles and features dealing with the home and “häuslicher Tätigkeiten mit Ratschlägen” (household activities accompanied by advice), according to Graf.<sup>81</sup>

*Der Bazar*, however, took the opposite turn in coverage, as already suggested by its masthead and further supported by its content. The publication shifted from a broader all-encompassing home magazine (one including recipes and advice on home economics) to a more refined and focused fashion and lifestyle publication. Graf places *Der Bazar* in

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<sup>79</sup> As already noted, very little research has been conducted on *Der Bazar*, *Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*. While there is a fair amount of scholarship to be found on the other two publications considered in this dissertation, *Der Bazar* has been surprisingly ignored by previous scholarship on magazines and mass media of the time. Graf’s 2007 study *Die Ursprünge der modernen Medienindustrie: Familien- und Unterhaltungszeitschriften der Kaiserzeit* remains the only source I have located that considers *Der Bazar* as part of its study. While Graf’s work remains invaluable in its research on publication and distribution numbers for a number of European magazines during the second half of the nineteenth century, his study is not one that engage in-depth with *Der Bazar* and therefore overlooks certain trends and patterns in the publication’s content that would disagree with some of the overarching patterns for magazines clustered under the same umbrella category (*Hausfrauenzeitschrift*), under which he places *Der Bazar*. Nonetheless, his work remains indispensable for the overview in publication numbers offered as well as for being the sole secondary source on *Der Bazar* to date.

<sup>80</sup> Andreas Graf, *Die Ursprünge der modernen Medienindustrie: Familien- und Unterhaltungszeitschriften der Kaiserzeit* (Ablit: 2007), 42, <http://www.zeitschriften.ablit.de/graf/>

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

the category of “Hausfrauenblatt” (household magazine) despite a seeming trend within the publication to the opposite of what Graf offers as markers of this genre. Although the magazine continued to feature items for the home and fashion for children and husbands, there is a notable decrease in the number of articles featuring recipes (none by the end of the 1860s) and advice for caring for the home. As the publication developed, the emphasis was increasingly placed on *purchasing* things for the home, especially with the advent of advertisements at the back of each issue starting in December 1881.

The advertisements section, which started out small, gradually grew to take up as many as three full pages towards the end of each issue. These advertisements encompassed everything from household products and beauty items, to vacation destinations, and finally marriage, employment, and adoption announcements. The products for sale included items for the home (rugs, kitchen appliances, exotic sweets and drinks), beauty items for the female reader (most notably, a plethora of corsets), child rearing products such as milk formulas, cribs, and baby clothes, and various miscellaneous (and sometimes surprising) items such as hair extensions, bleaching creams for facial hair, tonics for migraines, and perfumes. In addition to products, services were also advertised in each issue. These included things such as dry cleaning facilities, music and drawing lessons, courses for speakers struggling with a stutter – claiming to cure “Stotterer” (stutterers) in a few short weeks – and even dog breeding facilities boasting of superior breeds, including “Damenhündchen” (ladies’ breeds) such as terriers, poodles, and “Englische Möpse” (English pugs).<sup>82</sup> Both the products sold and services offered catered to a wealthy and image-conscious consumer. They assumed a

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<sup>82</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, October 1881. Although the examples quoted here come from the October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1881 issue of *Der Bazar*, they are representative of the advertisements section at large.



patron with plenty of leisure time, who was not deterred by work and household duties from partaking in music and drawing classes. This was also a consumer, who valued aesthetics over function, as is made clear by the number of items designed to beautify and improve the appearance, and not necessarily well-being, of the body (such as the facial hair bleaching cream or the hair extensions).

This class assumption was further solidified by the plethora of advertisements for travel destinations and spas (“Kurorte”). Each advertisement section included a minimum of two to three vacation resorts within Germany and abroad. There were also advertisements seeking young girls “aus guter Familie” (from a good family) looking for work as governesses or travel companions. While some advertisements came from the potential employers directly, others were placed by young women seeking employment. These generally relied on a set rhetoric to promote and endorse the applicant. They identified themselves as “ein junges, gebildetes Mädchen” (a young, educated girl), “ein alleinstehendes, gebildetes, junges Mädchen aus guter Familie (30 Jahr., luther.)” (an independent, educated, young girl from a good family [30 years old, Lutheran]), or “ein kathol. Mädchen aus achtbarer Familie sucht Stelle als Stütze der Hausfrau” (a catholic girl from a respectable family looking for employment as an assistant to the homemaker).<sup>83</sup> The rhetoric almost always included the assurance of morality and proper upbringing (“from a good family”) and an indication of a religious education. Thus endorsed, the young women in question presented their services to wealthier older women in need of household or travel assistance.

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<sup>83</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, April 1881. These quoted advertisements come from the April 1881 issue of *Der Bazar* and are representative of advertisements to be found in *Der Bazar* in general.

Another type of classified advertisement is also found in many of the issues – that of the widower or eligible bachelor looking for a marriage partner. None of these is authored by women advertising their marriage eligibility. They take a formulaic approach similar to this one:

Ein geachteter, routin. im In- u. Auslande geb. Kaufmann, der sein Geschäft verkauft hat, Protestant, Wittwer, Dreißiger, mit einem wohlerzogenen Knaben, wünscht wieder zu heirathen. Nach jeder Richtung hin unabhängig. . . . Derselbe verfügt über ein Vermögen b.M. 75,000. Damen entspr. Alters in gleichen Vermög.-Verhältnis. Werden gebeten, Adressen vertrauensvoll anzuschreiben. Strengste Diskretion aufs Ehrenwort zugesichert.<sup>84</sup>

As the above-cited advertisement illustrates, the bachelor or widower in question generally indicated his profession, age, religious affiliation, number of children, and income. Many asked for women who could match their financial standings, although some omitted this request. Also common was the ending phrase promising utmost discretion. Most advertisements also asked that the responding party supply a photograph. While many of the advertisements requested “einer nicht unvermögender Dame” (a lady not entirely lacking in means), some were open to responses from less financially privileged women, provided they came from a respectable family:

Ein Wittwer, 40 Jahre alt, Familie 2 Knaben, dessen Berufsthätigkeit ihm keine Gelegenheit zu Damenbekanntschaften giebt, wünscht sich mit einer Dame aus guter Familie zu verbinden. Ein liebesvolles Gemüth Hauptsache, Vermögen nicht erforderlich.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Translation: “A respected businessman who’s routinely abroad as well as at home, who’s recently sold his business, Protestant, widowed, in his thirties, with a well raised son, wishes to remarry. Independent in every sense of the word . . . enjoys a fortune of 75,000 b.M., Ladies of same age and similar financial situation are kindly requested to send their addresses. The strictest discretion is promised.”

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Translation: “A widower, 40 years of age, family of two boys, whose employment leaves him with little opportunity to make female acquaintances, wishes to connect with a lady from a good family. Most important is a pleasant disposition, fortune not required.”

Although the above advertisement allowed less financially secure women to respond, others only thinly veiled their financial needs:

Ein Rittergutsbesitzer, früherer Offizier, aus sehr guter Familie, sucht eine gebildete Lebensgefährtin anständigen Herkommens mit hunderttausend Thalern disponiblen Vermögen.<sup>86</sup>

These advertisements in general provide insight into the type of readership presumed by the editors of *Der Bazar*. While the content showcasing lavish Parisian fashions and luxury household goods would suggest a reader of upper-middle to upper class, the advertisements appealing to single girls of modest means looking for employment or marriage paints another picture altogether.

The contradiction of the luxury goods displayed in the magazine and the employment offers provided in the classifieds section supports the idea that the fashion industry and the magazine world of the time worked together in promoting the consumer culture born of the industrial revolution. Upward mobility was marketed and sold to those eager to participate in this way of life. The fact that the magazine displayed women in opulent dress surrounded by a lavish home décor does not necessarily mean that the readers of *Der Bazar* found themselves in possession of those items. Nor does it simply demonstrate how women of the upper class were being sold images of a femininity bound to the home and family, as early feminist scholarship on women's magazine would suggest. Rather, the spaces created within *Der Bazar*, and in other publications like it, provided the impetus for spending supported by an economy driven by consumerism and industrialization. Fashion magazines provided the blueprints for consumers eager to participate in a growing market economy. They helped buyers construct a fantasy world

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Translation: "Proprietor of a manor, previously an officer, from a very good family, is looking for an educated life partner of a good name with a hundred thousand *taler* at her disposal."

of home, family, fashion, and leisure that could be more easily reached based on the know-how provided within the magazine's pages. These magazines, moreover, provided the tools with which to navigate the semiotic system of fashion and mobility and supplied a space of fantasy that allowed the reader to envision a reality not necessarily mirroring that of her own life.

#### **V. *La Mode Illustrée, Journal de la Famille* and French Consumer Culture**

The second magazine of this study is *La Mode Illustrée, Journal de la Famille*, founded in 1860. *La Mode Illustrée* was published in Paris by the female editor Emmeline Raymond, who ran the magazine until her death in 1905. Like *Der Bazar*, it was published four times monthly and enjoyed impressive circulation numbers. At first glance, the two publications appear much alike in thematic scope and visual aesthetics. The masthead of *La Mode Illustrée* shares similarities with that of *Der Bazar* in that it features the publication's name on a ribbon-like garland before a backdrop of vines, leaves, and intertwined foliage. It, too, offers the image of a female figure in the center beneath the magazine's name. But even more striking is the similarity between the French publication's masthead and that of the popular German magazine *Die Gartenlaube*.

*Die Gartenlaube, Illustriertes Familienblatt* was founded in 1853 by Ernst Keil and became one of the most widely distributed German magazines of its time. It was published weekly, like *Der Bazar*, and aimed to entertain and educate the entire family. Its circulation figures rose well above those of competitor magazines and it remains today one of the most well-studied German publications by scholars of nineteenth-century mass

media. The magazine's masthead featured an image of the extended family gathered around a table while the patriarch reads from a journal or magazine, presumably *Die Gartenlaube* itself. While the grandfatherly figure reads, a woman plays with a toddler on her lap, a father figure peers over the grandfather's shoulders, and several other family members sit around the table and listen. This scene suggests to the reader that the publication in his or her hands is appropriate for the entire family, no matter what gender or age. *Die Gartenlaube* is meant to be shared by the entire household and can be enjoyed by all. Moreover, it functions as a cohesive element bringing the entire extended family together for an activity that all can enjoy.<sup>87</sup>

*Die Gartenlaube* was indeed enjoyed by many and was widely recognized as one of the most popular German periodicals at the time. As noted, even today, much scholarship on German mass media of the nineteenth century focuses on this influential publication. It was likely no coincidence that France's *La Mode Illustrée* chose *Die Gartenlaube* as a model for its own masthead, trying to follow in the German magazine's successful footsteps by emulating its look and appeal. Furthermore, despite being a fashion magazine and sharing more similarities with *Der Bazar*, *La Mode Illustrée* used the subtitle "Journal pour la famille" (journal for the family) in yet another attempt to copy the success of *Die Gartenlaube*. Presumably, by aiming to attract the entire family as readers, *La Mode Illustrée* hoped to garner the kind of attention and circulation numbers that *Die Gartenlaube* enjoyed. The content, however, was more akin to the one found in *Der Bazar*. Many of the images found in *La Mode Illustrée* were exact copies of ones in *Der Bazar* and some images were even published in the same year on the front

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<sup>87</sup> See Kirsten Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation, Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln: U. of Nebraska Press, 1998). I will return to the concept of nation building by magazines in my next chapter when I focus on *Der Bazar* more exclusively.

page of corresponding issues to its German counterpart, a phenomenon to which I will shortly return.

As already noted, the masthead of *La Mode Illustrée* serves as a useful point of entry into the magazine itself. It features a single female figure, like the masthead of *Der Bazar*, in the center of the illustration. This figure sits on an intricately carved armchair, pointing something resembling a wand at four naked and winged cherubs floating before her. In addition to the woman and the cherubs, a grand piano is seen in the background, in front of which a large and gilded urn stands amidst books piled in disarray. On one of the books, a jar of ink with several quills rests along with several sheets of paper. Another book is propped open displaying music scores. A mandolin rests on top of this opened book, propped both on its pages and balancing on the urn.

To the right of this arrangement sits the woman in the armchair, dressed as ornately as the décor of her chair. A miniature hat with two feathers adorns her curly head of hair; billowing sleeves and floor-length skirts encase her body. Further to the right, a floating cherub holds an oblong hand mirror towards the woman while opening a chest of jewels with the other hand. The intricately decorated chest is bursting open with the contents spilling out, showcasing bejeweled crowns, strings of pearls, rings, and other ornaments. To the right of the cherubs and filling the left side of the image is an abundance of objects similarly strewn about as the books and musical accoutrements on the right of the banner. On this end, the viewer sees a pair of slippers, a large fan made of peacock feathers, a pair of scissors, a candleholder, a large screen lying on its side, flowers, an ornate flower pot, and a covered basket.

Just as the German publications aim to communicate through the use of their masthead the type of content to be expected within the publication, the masthead of *La Mode Illustrée* offers insights as to what the reader might expect when purchasing an issue. Despite the subtitle suggesting that this publication is aimed at the family, the image accompanying the title professes a focus on the female reader along with an interest in all things pertaining to leisure and entertainment: fashion, reading, writing, and music. And as in *Der Bazar*, Christianity, wholesomeness, and innocence are invoked through the presence of the cherubs. Moreover, this masthead remained consistent throughout the decades of its publication.

A typical issue contained, much as in *Der Bazar*, fashion plates and fashion writings, installments from narrative fiction, crossword puzzles and music scores, letters from foreign correspondents, advice columns, reports on current events, and accounts of royal weddings. It is noteworthy that the French publication did not have a section devoted to advertisements the way *Der Bazar* did, and it was not until 1889 – nearly a decade after the inauguration of advertisements in *Der Bazar* – that *La Mode Illustrée* featured its first advertisement in the back of the September issue. Even then, the advertisements found in the French magazine did not promote a product or company but rather introduced a newly founded lending library owned by publishers of *La Mode Illustrée*, offering complete works by authors commonly featured in the magazine. The advertisement for the lending library lists the authors' names and offers information on the borrowing process. It was not until October 1889 that the first full-page advertisements section ran, mirroring the look of *Der Bazar* and offering home goods and

consumer products, such as corsets, sewing machines, tooth paste, and corsets (“ceinture Ismael,”)<sup>88</sup> among others.

Despite the discrepancy in advertisement strategies, *Der Bazar* and *La Mode Illustrée* shared many commonalities. The fashion plates used in both magazines are identical in style and often feature the same image in corresponding issues of both publications. Such is the case with the January 1878 cover image for both magazines. The same lithograph showing a pair of female ice skaters gliding across a frozen pond introduces the issue for the New Year. Two weeks later, the third January issue of 1878 once again features the same lithograph both in *Der Bazar* and *La Mode Illustrée*, with an image of two women engrossed in conversation in front of an oversized bookshelf.

The similarities go beyond the lithographs used to illustrate the magazines; they also extend to the content and texts within the magazines as well. One mainstay of both publications is the fashion section, which showcases the latest trends in cut, cloth, and color while giving brief explanations as to how the garment is made, what colors are to be used (when the lithograph is in black and white), and where such garments can be obtained. Another regular component are the removable sewing patterns and embroidery instructions found in each issue. These allowed the housewife to use her newly purchased sewing machine to make her own clothes following the latest trends in cut and design.

In addition to instructions on dressing oneself, each issue featured fashions for children and décor for the home. The children’s sections showcase outfits, toys, and furniture, while the home décor section focuses on outfitting the ideal sitting room, knowing the latest trends in color schemes, carpeting choice, furniture placement, and where one could obtain these.

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<sup>88</sup> *La Mode Illustrée, Journal de la Famille*, October 1889.



What becomes apparent looking at both these publications is how the international market economy of the time infiltrated and influenced this medium. The industrialization of the nineteenth century moved the nuclear family into the cities away from the extended family. It took husbands out of the home and put them into factories. It assigned the domestic sphere to wives, leaving them in charge of the children and household labor. The gender role division in bourgeois and rural households became increasingly bifurcated; men worked outside of the home to finance the family household while women became responsible for the maintenance and presentation of the house and children. Moreover, the consumer culture born of the rise of industrialization pushed people to purchase and *consume*, rather than produce for themselves what a factory or company could make and sell. This change is especially evident in the plethora of advertisements present in *Der Bazar*, but also on a subtler level, in the emphasis on home décor, fashion, and aesthetics in both magazines. Both publications imply that a happy home is a well-outfitted and decorated home, filled with well-dressed children and ornately styled women.

Noteworthy, however, is the contrast between the bourgeois woman's outfit and her bourgeois husband's attire, in both the German and the French publication. As ostentatious as her garments and accessories were, his were startlingly simple and austere by comparison. Perrot writes of "the stiffness, austerity, and asceticism of his attire [that] would thereafter totally differentiate male from female."<sup>89</sup> He argues that women became the objects of conspicuous consumption as they represented and symbolized their husbands' and fathers' wealth with the garments and jewelry adorning their bodies.

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<sup>89</sup> Perrot, 30.

Perrot terms this phenomenon “vicarious consumption,”<sup>90</sup> suggesting that women took on the role of walking signpost announcing their husband’s and father’s success by displaying in their opulence the implied wealth and potency of the men they represented.

In short, the removal of vestimentary laws coupled with the rise in industrialization and consumerism directly influenced gender roles and how these were expressed. Moreover, writings for women did not occur in a vacuum. Such works were products of a context and time that valued spending and consumption, cognizant of the fact that women were endowed with the role of conspicuous consumer and displayer of family wealth. This practice did not only take place on a national level, but – as the women’s magazines analyzed here suggest – took hold across an international playing field. This becomes all the more apparent when considering the third publication, *Harper’s Bazar*, and the ways in which the American, German, and French magazines collaborated in bringing market goods and consumer products to readers all across the Western world.

## **VI. *Harper’s Bazar*: Consumerism and Fashion on an International Level**

The third publication I analyze is *Harper’s Bazar*, founded in 1867 in New York by Harper and Brothers. This was the last of the three to come on the scene and was heavily influenced by both its German and French predecessors. Like *La Mode Illustrée*, *Harper’s Bazar* was run by a female editor, Mary Louise Booth, who oversaw the magazine until her death in 1889. *Harper’s Bazar* changed ownership soon thereafter – in 1902 – and subsequently changed its name to the current version of *Harper’s Bazaar*. Initially, however, the magazine, just like its name, was closely modeled after the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 33.

German *Der Bazar*. Once more, the masthead is revelatory in its highlighting of these connections. The masthead of *Harper's Bazar* appeared as a near carbon copy of *Der Bazar*, with only a slight difference in name and a minor variation on the female figure resting in the first capital letter. The subtitle of *Harper's Bazar* reads "A repository of Fashion, Pleasure, and Instruction."

In her work *Victorian Fashions and Costumes from Harper's Bazar, 1867-1898*, Stella Blum elaborates on the meaning of this subtitle and the intended focus of the magazine. She writes, "according to its first editorial, its aim was to be a publication which would combine the useful with the beautiful. Although it would include everything that would be interesting to the family circle, it was largely intended for ladies."<sup>91</sup> The first editorial went on to explain: "In this connection, the fashions are naturally an important subject: three hundred millions of dollars being annually expended in this country for dry goods, the making up of which is executed or superintended almost wholly by the female portion of the household."<sup>92</sup> The magazine's editors recognized from the outset that women were the primary consumers of the period and the obvious target audience for a magazine featuring domestic goods, fashion, and material items of all sorts ready to be acquired. The editorials continued to explain that "special arrangements have been made with leading European journals, particularly with the German *Der Bazar* whereby *Harper's Bazar* would receive fashion designs in advance

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<sup>91</sup> Stella Blum, *Victorian Fashions and Costumes from Harper's Bazar, 1867-1898*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), v.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

and publish them at the same time that they appeared in Paris, Berlin, and other European cities.”<sup>93</sup>

The first editorial of *Harper's Bazar* makes it sufficiently clear that the magazine relied heavily on its German counterpart in providing the latest fashion news and product information stemming from Europe to the American consumer. Not only did the American magazine depend on its German sister publication for images and information, but it also employed Mme Emmeline Raymond, the editor of *La Mode Illustrée*, as its foreign correspondent from Paris.<sup>94</sup> Thus, cultural exchange taking place between these three publications became increasingly convoluted and complex. As already noted, *Der Bazar* was first to come on the market. *La Mode Illustrée* came second, mirroring much of the German magazine's content and visual layout, suggesting that the French publication looked to the German one as its model. The German publication, however, used French fashion jargon and terminology prolifically throughout its issues, a rhetorical move that highlighted the leading role of French fashion and culture at the time. *Der Bazar* often featured fashions and trends emerging from Paris and wrote of the latest fads dominating Parisian culture. The American *Harper's Bazar* used lithographs and materials compiled for the reading audience of *Der Bazar* and relied on the contributions of the French magazine's editor for information on trends in Europe. Thus, cultural exchange intersected on many levels as evidenced in these periodicals, making it difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct a linear trajectory of cultural influence in the publications targeting the nineteenth-century female reader.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 3.

Not only was the sharing of materials between the different fashion magazines made plain with the obvious overlap in content and images, the fact of collaboration was touted to endorse and promote the American magazine's worth on the North American market. Its alliance with the European publication *Der Bazar* is presented as placing the magazine a step ahead of its competitors. But the path of influence did not only lead from Europe to America. Sections of the American *Harper's Bazar* suggest that it also conversely influenced the German and French publications. This influence is illustrated by the fact that the 1876 issues of *Harper's Bazar* already featured multi-page classified advertisement sections exactly like the ones to come to *Der Bazar* in 1881 and to *La Mode Illustrée* in 1889. The January 1876 issues of *Harper's Bazar* offered sewing machines, toys, "Ivin's patent hair crimpers", "hand-sewed shoes", and services such as treatments for cancer and opium habits.<sup>95</sup> This suggests that the American market was using women's fashion magazines and print advertisements to promote consumerism before it became common practice in France or Germany. This suggests that the German *Der Bazar* derived its model for its advertisement section from *Harper's Bazar*, which later influenced the French *La Mode Illustrée* as well. As noted, the trajectory of the cultural transfer taking place between these three publications is thus difficult to trace and likely without a clear point of origin. Rather, it appears that communication between the fashion magazines of these three Western nations intersected on multiple levels and prompted the sharing of ideas (particularly on the role and space allotted to the middle and upper class woman) from a mix of national perspectives and ideologies.

## VII. Conclusion: Distinguishing the National from the International

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<sup>95</sup> *Harper's Bazar*, January 1876.

The fashion industry and the magazines promoting it played a direct role in how the greater socioeconomic movements of the time influenced the collective understanding of gender and class across national lines. Since fashion operated as a semiotic system that communicated class and gender belonging (particularly in a post-vestimentary-laws world), and since it was no longer confined to a national context as a result of printing innovations and international trade and exchange, it helped to shape the social imagination regarding how class and gender were to be understood. In short, upward mobility (be it real or imagined) was widely encouraged through the promotion of consumption and material acquisition. Women were given the role of conspicuous consumer, in charge of representing the family wealth and embodying the spirit of materialism and modernization. National or regional belonging, on the other hand, was for certain groups no longer easily read based on a person's sartorial choices. The magazine industry disseminated fashion across an international playing field and benefited from an increase in cultural transfer and the improved international exchange of goods and ideas.

How then did this exchange affect the formation of a national identity, particularly in the German context? If the majority of content was to be found in the French and American publications of its time, then what distinguished the German magazine from its international collaborators? The following chapters take a closer look at how and when *Der Bazar* offered a uniquely German viewpoint on matters of class and gender in an attempt to promote a specifically German counterpoint to the international dialogue on class and gender relations. Each chapter will focus on a specific theme as a point of entry to this discussion, using accoutrements of mobility as the lens through

which class and gender were presented to a German-speaking readership. By considering how certain objects of (im)mobility – such as the corset, the crinoline, the shoe, or horse riding attire – were discussed in a German context in particular, we are able to discern how the mass media in Germany aimed to construct a national image specific to its readers. I will analyze this national image in light of writings *by* women in contrast to the contemporary mass media *for* women. Chapter two will focus on *Der Bazar* specifically and on how the German publication set itself apart from its French and American counterparts. While this chapter has established the collaboration that was evident between the three publications, the following chapter will look at where and when the German magazine chose to stray from the international dialogue in pursuit of a domestic agenda. Chapter two of this dissertation will also focus on the dialogue between the German *Der Bazar* and the three German speaking women writers named above in a quest better to understand how writings for women and by women reacted to the relevant topics of their time.

## Chapter Two: Fashioning a National Identity

### I. Nation Building and Finding a National Identity

The nineteenth-century magazine industry operated on an international playing field. Due to the overlap in the content of the French, German, and American magazines introduced in the previous chapter, it becomes all the more pertinent to ask what remained national, unique, and particular to the German *Der Bazar*. Finding and identifying topics and areas where *Der Bazar* took on a national stance and separated from the international voice of the time helps us identify how the German publication conceived of a national identity. Moreover, it provides insight on how the popular press, and the fashion magazines aimed at women in particular, presented to its readership the image of the ideal German wife and mother. In this chapter, I will first address the concept of “national identity” as it has been discussed in previous scholarship. I will then investigate how nationalism figures in the pages of *Der Bazar*. Finally, I turn to the works by the German and Austrian nineteenth-century writers Rosa Mayreder, Louise Otto Peters, and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach to present how these women writers of the time responded to the discourses surrounding class and gender roles. Their presentation of the “German woman” offers a counterpoint to the images presented by women’s fashion magazines and allows for a different lens through which to view and better understand class and gender roles at the time.

As demonstrated in chapter one, *Der Bazar*, *La Mode Illustrée*, and *Harper’s Bazar* all presented similar, often identical, material to the bourgeois housewife of the nineteenth century. Focusing on family, fashion, and the home, these publications provided their female readers with a blueprint for navigating their gender and class roles



during a time of social change. The overlap in content becomes clear in the use of identical images, similar narratives and articles, and even in overt references to shared material by the editors of the magazines. Although all three publications operated beyond national lines to deliver a carefully constructed image of womanhood and domesticity, deviations and departures from that discourse reveal key elements in the construction of a nationally based ideology of gender and class. In other words, through an investigation of the specifically national discourses found in *Der Bazar* we gain a better understanding of what constituted the nineteenth-century “German woman.”

Kirstin Belgum addresses the concept of national identity as portrayed and enforced through the medium of the popular press in her work *Popularizing the Nation. Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900*. First, Belgum concedes that the idea of a “national identity” is fraught with complications and potential pitfalls. She writes, “the search for national identity has been perhaps the most politically influential concern in the last two centuries. It has motivated the founding of states and political movements, and it has led to the destruction of societies and brutal persecution of minorities who have been excluded from the definition of the nation.”<sup>96</sup> Belgum concedes that “defining this phenomenon goes beyond the scope of any one volume.”<sup>97</sup> Moreover, discourses on national identity have triggered violence and conflict and are often grounded in a construction of the “Other,” capitalizing on differences and exclusion rather than commonalities and inclusion. Belgum argues that

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<sup>96</sup> Kirsten Belgum, *Popularizing the nation: audience, representation and the production of identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xxvii.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, xxviii.

writing about national identity is a task best undertaken with the sober realization that it cannot be completed by any one writer or work and that the subject is “elusive at best.”<sup>98</sup>

Anthony Pym pursues a similar argument in his article “Cross-Cultural Networking: Translators in the French-German Network of *Petites Revues* at the End of the Nineteenth Century” by elaborating on the problems faced by scholars seeking out a “national identity” in translated works.<sup>99</sup> Pym focuses on texts in translation in particular and on the translator as cultural intermediary. He points to the difficulty in assigning a text or subject (both material and immaterial) to one distinct group. I cite Belgium’s and Pym’s reservations on this topic up front in order to raise the concerns I too share as I write about national identity as presented within the pages of *Der Bazar*. Much like scholars before me, I proceed with caution as I address this complex topic. While aware of the limitations of such scholarship, I proceed with an analysis that is not looking to reconstruct a national image per se, but rather to present and highlight the discourses used to construct a nineteenth-century national ideology of class and gender.

Belgium makes a case for why she approaches her analysis of *Die Gartenlaube* with the search for a national identity – an undertaking that she admits is problematic at best. I present her arguments and a brief descriptions of *Die Gartenlaube*, the publication to which she turns in her analysis of national identity, as this provides insight into the work I aim to do with the similarly structured *Der Bazar*. Belgium argues that looking at

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Anthony Pym, “Cross-Cultural Networking: Translators in the French-German Network of *Petites Revues* at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” *Meta: Translators’ Journal* 52, no. 4 (2007): 746. Many other theorists have written on the subject of national identity and translation in works are more widely distributed and recognized. I chose Pym to inform my readings because his work on French and German relations in particular and his focus on the role of the translator as intermediary provides insight into how Emmeline Raymond, editor of *La Mode Illustrée*, interacted with the works of German writers as she translated texts for a French audience and contributed her own works to the German audience of *Der Bazar*.

how the popular press discussed and portrayed certain topics allows for a better understanding of how the construction of class and gender took place in a German context during the nineteenth century.

*Die Gartenlaube*<sup>100</sup> was founded in 1853 (two years prior to *Der Bazar*) and boasted circulation numbers as high as 385,000 by the mid 1870s.<sup>101</sup> Ernst Keil, the founder of the magazine, was known for his liberal leanings and populist outlook. He wanted a publication to appeal to all members of the German nation, aiming to educate and enlighten his readers through enjoyment and entertainment. *Die Gartenlaube*, and *Der Bazar* soon thereafter begun publication at a time when the nation was in need of guidance and unification. Keil developed the plan for *Die Gartenlaube* during his political imprisonment<sup>102</sup> and he inaugurated the newspaper in 1853, shortly after his release. According to Heidemarie Gruppe, the *Familienzeitschrift* (family magazine) was a strategically selected genre since it typically avoids politics and appears to be focused on the domestic and the local, thus often escaping censorship.<sup>103</sup> *Der Bazar*, a woman's fashion and home magazine, easily fell under this category with its focus on all things

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<sup>100</sup> Scholars have long treated *Die Gartenlaube* as pertinent to the study of national identity and German culture during the nineteenth century. This inclusion is largely based on the magazine's popularity and large circulation numbers. Despite our discipline's biases in favor of the literary canon, *Die Gartenlaube* as a popular publication is worth our consideration. Because *Die Gartenlaube* circulated throughout so many German homes, scholars recognize the magazine as having played an influential role in the construction of a national identity and having influenced the collective imagination in Germany during the nineteenth century. Magazines with lesser circulation numbers, such as *Der Bazar*, however, continue to be largely overlooked and dismissed as insignificant to serious scholarship despite their providing a similar point of entry into their time and culture. My research aims to correct the bias in favor of the more well-known (to modern scholars) publication *Die Gartenlaube* and offer how a similar analysis of the women's magazine *Der Bazar* provides valuable insight into the nineteenth-century construction of class and gender roles.

<sup>101</sup> Belgum, xi.

<sup>102</sup> Keil was imprisoned in 1852 for a period of nine months for his political and satirical publications.

<sup>103</sup> Gruppe, 30.

aesthetic and domestic. Magazines placed in this category had advantages over those labeled as overtly political in that they could influence the public discourse in a more latent and non-provocative way. In other words, by publishing on topics that were generally coded as inconsequential to the political landscape of the time, these periodicals could spread ideologies and influence public opinion in a covert and more “off-hand” sort of way.<sup>104</sup>

Not only did family magazines such as *Der Bazar* escape the accusations directed at political magazines and newspapers, they also increasingly appealed to a reading audience that wanted publications covering a broader and more diverse range of topics. The plethora of *Fachmagazine* (specialist publications) that came out of the nineteenth century exemplifies this desire for information and communication to which print technology responded. The failed revolution of 1848 pitted the middle classes against the aristocracy in their quest for political rights and economic power and added to the vigor with which the bourgeoisie had sought to educate and refine itself since the days of the Enlightenment. Dag-Ernst Peterson, in his work *Gebunden in der Dampfbuchbinderei. Buchbinden im Wandel des 19. Jahrhunderts*, writes,

Eine neue gesellschaftliche Schicht, das Mittelbürgertum, löste zumindest auf dem wirtschaftlich-technischen Gebiet in Deutschland die Feudalaristokratie ab und versuchte durch Bildung und Kultur Terrain für sich zu erobern.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> I return to this argument in chapter five, in which I look more closely at the feminist arguments in favor of women’s education presented in the mainstream *Der Bazar* and in the more radical publications written by women, such as Louise Otto’s *Frauenzeitung*. As chapter five demonstrates, there was a clear advantage to presenting information in more mainstream magazines as they reached a broader audience and were less likely to be suspected of and rejected on the basis of enforcing a radical ideology.

<sup>105</sup> Ernst-Peter Bielsaki and Dag-Ernst Peterson. *Gebunden in der Dampfbuchbinderei. Buchbinden im Wandel des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994) 26. Translation: “A new social class, the middle class, replaced at least on an economic and industrial level the feudal aristocracy and aimed, with the help of education and cultural awareness, to increasingly secure power for itself.”

Books, reading, and intellectual property replaced the pitchforks and axes of previous revolutions. Some embraced reading for intellectual purposes; others gravitated to books and printed matter because of their symbolic nature – the new, beautifully embellished and expertly bound books or magazines represented progress, industrialization, and – by extension – power.

Capitalizing on this demand for reading material, Keil developed a magazine that strove to enlighten and educate in a way that was accessible to the average middle class reader.<sup>106</sup> In an 1868 edition of *Die Illustrierte Zeitung* (not to be confused with the similarly titled *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*), Keil explained his pedagogical approach to his work:

Was nun die Lehrbücher für die lernende Jugend, das sind die ‘Illustrierten Zeitungen’ im großen und ganzen, indem sie aus dem Strom des Lebens der Gegenwart diejenigen Erscheinungen herausgreifen und bildlich veranschaulichen welche nicht nur überhaupt das Interesse erregen, sondern deren genauere Kenntnisse für das Verständnis der so mannigfaltigen und überreichen Entwicklung der Zeitgeschichte notwendig ist.<sup>107</sup>

In other words, Keil strove to compose his publication much like a *Lehrbuch* (school book) for adults, depicting important current events in text and image to educate his contemporaries about the world around them. From the outset, Keil had a clear vision of what his publication ought to be, offering a list of aspects he intended to include in each issue of his magazine. Dieter Barth lists these in their entirety in his study *Das*

*Familienblatt. Ein Phänomen der Unterhaltungspresse des 19. Jahrhunderts*. I reproduce

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<sup>106</sup> Belgum, xii.

<sup>107</sup> Ulla Wishermann, *Frauenfrage und Presse: Frauenarbeit und Frauenbewegung in der illustrierten Presse des 19. Jahrhunderts* (New York: K.G.Saur, 1983), 3. Translation: “Just as schoolbooks for learning youths set out to do, the ‘illustrated papers’ do the same in that they extract from the contemporary flow of life those experiences and images that not only entertain, but which are also necessary for a better understanding of the manifold and abundant developments of the current time period.”

them in abbreviated form below as they mirror in striking similarity the content to be found in *Der Bazar*:<sup>108</sup>

1. Gedichte unseres besten Poeten, und zwar stets gut illustriert.
2. Novellen, möglichst kurz, mit höchstens zwei bis drei Fortsetzungen. Ebenfalls illustriert.
3. Schilderungen, besonders Interessante, der Sitten, Gebräuche und Zustände und fremder Völker.
4. Briefe aus der Natur. Irgendeine Persönlichkeit die noch zu erfinden, bespricht in durchaus populären Briefen die wichtigsten und nächstliegenden Fragen aus dem Naturleben.
5. Der äußere und innere Mensch. Eine Reihe ebenfalls populärer Briefe über den Bau, Tätigkeit und das Leben des menschlichen Körpers. Mit Abbildungen . . . (natürlich mit größter Dezenz).
6. Ein kleines Feuilleton mit Notizen aus der Zeit der Literatur schließt jede Nummer.<sup>109</sup>

This diverse list of contents highlights Keil's intention to educate the reader in all aspects of contemporary life – from poetics to the human body – and it also points to the eclectic nature of the topics and materials consumed by readers of this time. The list reads much like an enumeration of the topics and areas featured by *Der Bazar*, omitting only fashion and home décor.

Despite the obvious parallels in coverage, scholars have largely overlooked *Der Bazar* in analyses of nineteenth-century German life and culture. This inattention can either be attributed to the lesser circulation numbers of *Der Bazar* or its target audience

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<sup>108</sup> I quote directly from Barth's list, which quotes Ernst Keil, but I have shortened each point to include only the first few phrases. For the complete list, see Dieter Barth, *Das Familienblatt. Ein Phänomen der Unterhaltungspresse des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1975), 175.

<sup>109</sup> Dieter Barth, *Das Familienblatt. Ein Phänomen der Unterhaltungspresse des 19. Jahrhunderts. Beispiele zur Gründungs- und Verlagsgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1975), 175. Translation: "1. Poems from our best poets, and always with illustrations./ 2. Novellas, fairly short and with no more than two or three installments, also with illustrations./ 3. Narrations that are particularly noteworthy of customs, manners, and situations and foreign nations./ 4. Letters about the natural world. Some still to be determined person will contribute popular letters about the most pressing and requested information regarding the natural world./ 5. The outer and inner life of man. A series of equally popular letters about the built, capabilities and life of the human body. With illustrations . . . of the highest discretion, of course./ 6. A small feature with notes on literature will conclude each issue."

of predominantly women.<sup>110</sup> Yet the editors of *Die Gartenlaube* knew to value the appeal and power of *Der Bazar* as they advertised subscriptions to *Die Gartenlaube* in the classifieds section of *Der Bazar*.<sup>111</sup> By seeking to attract more women readers to the family magazine that was attempting to present itself as a publication for both genders, and doing so within the pages of *Der Bazar*, the influential *Gartenlaube* demonstrates that *Der Bazar* was also an established and powerful publication.

Looking at the nineteenth-century popular press in general, Belgium argues that “the search for a national identity was inextricably linked to the early popular press. . . . In the period when national identity in Germany most needed defining, the *Gartenlaube*, and other popular magazines, came forward to represent the nation to a mainstream readership.”<sup>112</sup> According to Belgium, the mid-nineteenth century was a time of social and political flux, a time when there was no such thing as a defined national image or German identity. She argues that the popular press stepped in when the German people needed help defining who they were. This medium had the advantage of being created quickly and updated just as quickly, incorporating reader feedback into each succeeding issue. Belgium writes, “the popular press of the nineteenth century . . . became both a disseminator of national images and identities to a large national audience and a

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<sup>110</sup> Although *Der Bazar*’s reported circulation numbers only make up about one third of *Die Gartenlaube*’s circulation, this should not diminish the former’s influence and notability. *Der Bazar* appealed to a female reading audience and thus only targeted a subgroup of *Die Gartenlaube*’s target audience. With such, it comes as no surprise that a niche magazine such as *Der Bazar* would have less of a following than a more mainstream magazine.

<sup>111</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, February 1885. The advertisement for subscriptions to the family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* is wedged between advertisements for diet pills, clothing suppliers, and a military preparatory school. The advertisement for *Die Gartenlaube* informs readers of the subscription price and delivery details. The advertisement appealed to the women readers of *Der Bazar*, which would have constituted a niche market for *Die Gartenlaube*, a publication that prided itself in appealing to readers of both genders and all ages.

<sup>112</sup> Belgium, xi.

mechanism for that mass audience to participate in the process of constructing those images and identities.”<sup>113</sup> In other words, magazines and newspapers both incorporated their readership’s outlook on the nation and proliferated those viewpoints and ideologies, simultaneously absorbing and distributing public opinion. Consequently, the popular press and publications such as *Der Bazar* became a powerful tool for creating a general understanding of what it meant to be “German” at that point and time in history.

In addition to shaping the collective imagination, Belgum points to another important aspect of the popular press – that of the press as a commodity. She cites Richard Terdiman as having identified the commodification of the newspaper and extends his arguments to apply to magazines as well. Terdiman writes the following about the newspaper as commodity: “Once it became clear that space in a newspaper could be *sold*, all the space in the paper became potentially salable, potentially purchasable.”<sup>114</sup> Consequently, all of the space within the pages of a newspaper – and magazines – became space for rent for businesses or individuals promoting a product or idea. All space was seen as being in competition with neighboring space. As capitalism dictates, when monetary value is placed on a given thing, it becomes a commodity and it enters into competition with other commodities. A magazine such as *Der Bazar*, with its finite number of pages, offered limited space for which commodities could compete, making it all the more pertinent to see which ideas and ideologies gained representation and which did not. Looking at how ideas and topics fared in the competition for representation offers the modern reader yet another lens through which to understand

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<sup>113</sup> Belgum, xix.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., emphasis in original.



how nineteenth-century culture was constructed and disseminated by the magazines of the time. The following section further explores the role of the popular press, and that of *Der Bazar* in particular, in creating and distributing ideas surrounding culture, gender, and class belonging to its German readership.

## II. *Der Bazar* and Imagined Communities

An important attribute of the press in general, and of *Der Bazar* in particular, is its ability to create “imagined communities.”<sup>115</sup> Belgium borrows the term from Benedict Anderson’s well-known definition of nation as “an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”<sup>116</sup> According to Anderson, imagined communities have little to do with national boundaries and are not dependent on face-to-face interactions between their members; rather, they are forged based on shared interests and beliefs. Belgium points to Anderson’s argument that print-capitalism was a key factor in the emergence of imagined communities.<sup>117</sup>

As Belgium explains,

The development of print thus laid the groundwork for many geographically dispersed individuals to have contact with one another through common reading material. By participating in the same experience simultaneously, they could, without any direct, face-to-face contact, conceive of themselves as members of the same group. In other words, the medium of print helped establish the bond of a common language and the production of distributable texts that played a key role in the creation of modern Western nations.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Belgium, xvii.

<sup>116</sup> Anderson, 224.

<sup>117</sup> Belgium, xvii.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

She argues that the different and disparate groups within Germany after the 1848 revolution could find common ground through the collective sense of community created by the popular press. The key attributes of this shared belonging are a common language and access to the same print material. Thus, citizens living in North German territories could, with the aid of the popular press, find a common bond with their South German neighbors without face-to-face interaction. It sufficed that both groups were addressed and represented in a text so widely distributed that it reached people in all the German territories.

Although Belguem's analysis focuses on how a sense of community was created by the popular press in Germany, I suggest that the circle of influence extended to include Austria as well. Despite a history of competition between Austria and the Prussian states and the conflicts that culminated in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, the articles in *Der Bazar* point to a popular understanding of "German" that included its Austrian neighbors and relied on a shared language, history, and culture, rather than transient and penetrable borders, as markers of inclusion.

This is well exemplified by the 1862 article in *Der Bazar*, titled "Zwei Schriftstellerinnen, Eine vergleichende Studie" (Two writers, a comparative study).<sup>119</sup> The article compares the writings of two female writers, the Austrian Karoline von Greiner (later called Pichler)<sup>120</sup> and the French Madame de Staël.<sup>121</sup> The Austrian Pichler

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<sup>119</sup> Theodor Reinwald, "Zwei Schriftstellerinnen, Eine vergleichende Studie," *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, August 1862, 246-47.

<sup>120</sup> Karoline Pichler (1769 – 1843) was an Austrian novelist born in Vienna. She was part of an influential circle of writers and musicians in Vienna, having studied under Mozart and being acquainted with Haydn. Her salon became well known for drawing together prominent figures such as Grillparzer and Beethoven. Despite her notoriety, her early works were published anonymously. She later became well known for her historical romance novels. For more, see Gertrude Prohaska, *Der literarische Salon der Karoline Pichler* (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1946).

is offered as representative of the “German” literary figure in comparison to her French counterpart. The author of the article, Theodor Reinwald, notes that Pichler has often been referred to as “die deutsche Staël” (the German Staël), which he dismisses as an inaccurate observation.<sup>122</sup> Reinwald finds fault not with the comparison between the two writers as undertaken on a literary level but rather with the cultural assumptions inherent in a statement such as “die deutsche Staël.” According to Reinwald, the two have little in common and the virtue of the Austrian writer (here as representative of a “German” woman) becomes tarnished when such an unjust comparison is made. Reinwald articulates the difference between the two women writers by claiming that Staël was driven by passion and a desire to break the mold, whereas Pichler focused on more traditionally “female” topics such as motherhood, marriage, and religion. Reinwald praises Pichler for being content in her “natural” role as a woman, concluding that this allowed her to lead a happy and long life, while Staël remained torn between lovers, never at peace, and fated to an early death. Reinwald concludes his comparison with these final words that make plain his understanding of gender and women’s roles in the public domain:

Der bessere Kern ihrer [Pichlers] Schriften wäre doch manchem Product der neuen Literatur zu wünschen, und insbesondere die ‘schreibenden Frauen’, von denen der Fluch des Vorurtheils noch nicht ganz genommen ist, sollten die ihnen

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<sup>121</sup> Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein (1766 – 1817), known as Madame de Staël, was a French-speaking writer living predominantly in Paris. Like Pichler in Vienna, Madame de Staël was an influential and well-regarded member of the literary society during her time. She, too, began her career by publishing anonymously but was able to later republish her works under her own name. Other parallels to Pichler include her prominence as a ‘salonnière,’ bringing together influential writers, artists, and musicians at her home in Coppet, France. For more, see Maria Fairweather, *Madame de Staël* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005).

<sup>122</sup> Reinwald, 246.

gesteckte Grenze nie überschreiten, von Beruf der Frau auch in der schriftstellerischen Sphäre nie verleugnen.<sup>123</sup>

Reinwald's essay thus demonstrates the prejudice against which women writers were often forced to rebel, showing also how the popular press played its role in perpetuating an idealized image of the German wife and mother. As noted in chapter one, the popular belief that women's involvement in the literary world would threaten the existing social order thwarted women writers as they tried to build careers. The literary world was seen as the world of the mind and thus deemed incongruous with the "feminine sensibility," which was believed to be steeped in emotions and, as such, incompatible with any work reliant on reason and critical thinking. Reinwald's article provides one example of gender roles being enforced and disseminated with the help of the popular press. His essay also demonstrates how a German and specifically national image of womanhood was taking shape. According to Reinwald, the German (and Austrian) woman differed from her French counterpart by virtue of her maternal and domestic values. She holds her family and home above her professional aspirations, and unlike the French Madame de Staël, is thus rewarded with a rich and fulfilling home life.

In addition to presenting Karoline Pichler as representative of successful German writer, *Der Bazar* also featured the Austrian princess Elisabeth ("Sissi") as representative of a German monarchy in a comparison with Princess Charlotte of Wales, representative of the British royalty. One February issue of 1878 featured front-page portraits of Princess Elisabeth and Princess Charlotte with the caption "Zwei hohe Bräute" (Two

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 247. Translation: "the better part of her [Pichler's] writing would do many a writer good in the new literature of our time. Especially the 'scribbling woman,' against whom there is still much prejudice, would benefit from keeping with the boundaries placed on her in her role as woman, which should be observed within the literary sphere as well."

royal brides).<sup>124</sup> Surrounded by garlands of vines and two entwined wedding bands, the princesses were featured much as celebrity weddings are presented in tabloid magazines today. While the images and accompanying text are not remarkable, it is noteworthy once again that an Austrian woman is featured as representative of a “German” ideal. Examples such as these show how the German press perceived national identity and what groups were included in that category. German-speaking Austrians figure as part of a “German” identity, whereas the women of French and British descent figure as the “Other.” The magazine’s creation of “imagined communities” relies on language, geographical proximity, and a shared culture as criteria for inclusion.

At times, however, the sphere of inclusion shifts and grows to include additional countries and cultures. The imagined communities created by *Der Bazar* were anything but static and often changed according to subject matter, at times restricting the national image of woman to include only the German-speaking wife and mother and, at other times, expanding to include women of Western European nations in line with German ideology. For example, the above-cited article by Reinwald presents an understanding of the German woman (as represented by the Austrian writer Karoline Pichler) as fundamentally different from the French woman (as represented by the writer Mme de Staël). Other articles, such as “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar,” to which I will return in the following section, assumes commonalities between the French and German cultures and offers the two as united against the unrefined African “Other.” National identity is thus to be understood as dynamic and fluid. At times, the German woman is defined by her similarity to women of other European cultures, while at other times, she is presented

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<sup>124</sup> “Zwei hohe Bräute,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, February 1878, 246-47.

as unique and different from even her sisters in neighboring Western countries. The following section further explores how the image of the civilized and cultured middle-class German woman was constructed in the pages of *Der Bazar* with the aid of articles and images focusing on what the German woman was *not*. By offering images and texts representative of an unrefined “Other,” the magazine further enforced an ideology of gender, class, and national identity.

### III. The “German” vs. the Other

In the first issue of the 1869 edition of *Der Bazar*, the opening editorial note on the front page announced the magazine’s intention to establish itself as a “Weltblatt” (an international publication) with a “Weltruf” (an international reputation). The editors remark on the success of the publication over the previous decade and pledge to continue in the same vein in order to secure that international reputation and level of success. As noted in chapter one, the international component of the magazine is easily detected just as the connections and the overlaps between *Der Bazar*, *La Mode Illustrée*, and *Harper’s Bazar* can easily be established. But despite the abundant display of internationalism within *Der Bazar*, the publication did not shy away from publishing articles that highlighted the differences between the German (-speaking) culture and the cultures and customs of foreign nations.

One such example can be found in the April issue of 1862 in an article titled “Die Deutsche und Die Französin.”<sup>125</sup> Preceding the arguments offered by Reinwald in his treatise of the French and German women writers, the following text aims to highlight

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<sup>125</sup> “Die Deutsche und Die Französin,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, April 1862, 102.

differences between French and German women of the middle to upper classes by composing parallel examples that aim to illustrate the disparity in the cultural expression of femininity:

Die Französin macht Toilette, die Deutsche kleidet sich. Die Französin schwebt, die Deutsche geht. Die Deutsche ist entweder schön oder häßlich, die Französin niemals entschieden das eine oder das andere, aber immer reizend. Ob ruhig oder erregt, blickt die Deutsche stets klar und ehrlich, die Augen der Französinen leuchten gleich Blitzen, sie scheinen stets noch mit einem andern Gegenstand beschäftigt, als dem, worauf sie gerichtet sind. Die Deutsche sagt Ja oder Nein, bei der Französin bleibt es gewöhnlich unentschieden, was sie geantwortet. Die Deutsche wartet auf den Geliebten zehn Jahre, die Französin zehn Minuten. Die Französin ist artig, die Deutsche gut. Die Deutsche besitzt gründliche Kenntnisse, ohne darüber zu sprechen, die Französin hat nichts gelernt, weiß aber über alles zu plaudern. Die Französin hat *Esprit*, die Deutsche Gemüth. Die Deutsche ist zufrieden mit der Bewunderung eines Einzelnen, die Französin will der ganzen Welt gefallen. Der Deutschen ist ihr Haus ihre Welt, die Französin fühlt sich nur in der Welt zu Hause. Die Französin ist eine Künstlerin, die Deutsche eine Frau.<sup>126</sup>

Noteworthy is that the article does not offer a direct judgment of these cultural differences appealing instead to the reader to deduce the “correct” model of behavior on her own: “möge jede unserer Leserinnen an ihrem eigenen Herzen die Richtigkeit oder Unrichtigkeit der hier aufgestellten Behauptung prüfen.”<sup>127</sup> Unlike Reinwald’s article on the differences between the Austrian Pichler and the French Mme de Staël that ended with an argument for why the “German” writer is to be seen as the better role model for

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid. Translation: “The French woman primps, the German woman dresses herself. The French woman glides, the German woman walks. The German woman is either beautiful or ugly, the French woman never decidedly one or the other, but always alluring. Whether calm or agitated, the German woman’s eyes always look bright and honest, whereas the French woman’s eyes flash lightning, always seemingly preoccupied with something other than what they are observing. The German woman says yes or no, the French woman remains undecided in her answers. The German woman waits ten years for her lover, the French woman waits ten minutes. The French woman is well behaved, the German woman is good. The German woman possesses in-depth knowledge but she doesn’t talk about it, the French woman has learned little but knows how to talk about everything. The French woman has *esprit*, the German woman has mind. The German woman is satisfied by the admiration of one, the French woman wants to please the world. The German woman’s home is her world, the French woman is at home in the whole world. The French woman is an artist, the German woman is a woman.”

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. Translation: “May each reader decide in her own heart how accurate this portrayal may be.”

German women, the above-excerpted section on German and French peculiarities is left open to reader interpretation.

The question of authorship bears noting in an analysis of texts and images touting cultural differences and “superior” ways of performing femininity and upper-class belonging. The article on Staël and Pichler is credited to a male author of German ethnicity. The article on French and German women and their peculiarities is attributed to an anonymous author simply identified by the letter “E.” The latter article is additionally credited to a French magazine in which it was originally published. Based on the similarity in writing style and topic, as well as on the fact that the article in question was originally published in a French publication, we can speculate that the author “E” is indeed none other than Emmeline Raymond, writer, editor, prolific translator, and contributor to *Harper’s Bazar*, the magazine’s American sister publication. Raymond was editor of the French magazine *La Mode Illustrée*, the French magazine profiled in the introduction and first chapter of this dissertation. In addition to editing the French fashion magazine that mirrored in scope and content the German *Der Bazar*, Raymond also translated and published German works into French. Born to a German mother, Raymond was proficient in both French and German and traveled between both cultures and languages with ease. Her regular involvement with the German publication and with its American counterpart, as well as her prolific output of French-German translation work, gives us reason to believe that the article outlining differences between the French and the German woman is hers.

Raymond’s writings appear in several other issues of *Der Bazar* signed with her full name. If “E” is indeed none other than Raymond, then the inconsistent way of



assigning credit to her name begs the question of how authorship functioned. Authorship attribution in nineteenth-century magazines was inconsistent, and *Der Bazar* was no exception. It is difficult to know whether the disparity in signature is intentional so as to mask Raymond's authorship of particular works. Throughout *Der Bazar* articles and stories were signed in many ways: some with a full author name, others with only an initial; some were left unsigned, while others still only indicated that the text in question was a translation, noting sometimes neither the original source nor the translator. With all of these discrepancies in authorship attribution, it is difficult to say whether Emmeline Raymond's choice to lend her full name to some articles and only an initial to others was intentional or haphazard.

Pym addresses the role of the translator in his essay, "Cross-Cultural Networking," arguing that he or she plays the role of an "intermediary figure," someone neither part of one culture nor the other.<sup>128</sup> Raymond fits this image of the cultural hybrid: born to a German mother, raised in France, known for her writing career as editor of the French magazine *La Mode Illustrée* and translator of works by the popular German writer Eugenie Marlitt. She was adept at using both languages for professional gain and she was familiar with both French and German cultures.<sup>129</sup> Walking a fine line between both cultures, the article "Die Deutsche und Die Französin" is perfectly constructed to appeal to both national audiences: French and German. Despite its use of parallels in listing the different attributes of French and German women, it resists a "good" versus "bad" dichotomy, allowing the reader to use the cultural lens through

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<sup>128</sup> Pym, 751.

<sup>129</sup> See Raphaëlle Renken-Deshayes, '*Miroir, Mon Beau Miroir...*' *L'identité Féminine Définie Par Un Journal De Mode. La Mode Illustrée* (Neuchâtel: Editions Alphil, 2004) for more information on Emmeline Raymond, her professional accomplishments, and family history.

which she read the article to color her impressions of it. This begs the question of how a German or a French reader would have responded to such a purposefully ambiguous article. It is likely that both nationalities would have found traits with which to identify and others to dislike in the lengthy enumeration of characteristics.

The German woman – specifically the German bourgeois woman – was trained to identify certain characteristics as proper and praiseworthy and would have read the mention of her being educated yet reserved, focused on the home and domestic sphere, clean and put-together without appearing “coquettish” as favorable remarks. Since German bourgeois culture of the nineteenth century valued order, cleanliness, education, and domesticity, these would have been traits that the German middle class woman would have recognized as being socially desirable. Similarly, the French bourgeois woman would have read the article from the perspective informed by her nationality and culture and would have identified different traits as desirable and praise-worthy, such as her ability to be at home anywhere in the world and her vivacious and “coquettish” personality. Women of both nationalities could have read the text not only as a blueprint of their nation’s understanding of gender and class, but also as a model of how *not* to behave. The article cements the idea that there was a decidedly “German” way to be a woman as contrasted with the “French” way of performing femininity.

In addition to differentiating the German woman from her French counterpart, *Der Bazar* also offered articles that elaborated on the differences between women “at home” (in which case the circle of inclusion widened to include Frenchwomen and Western European women in general) and those from farther away and from more exotic cultures. One such example is found in the article titled “Die kleinen Füße der chineschen

Frauen”<sup>130</sup> (The small feet of Chinese women) signed with the same enigmatic “E.” The author provides a narrative to explain how foot binding became such a prevalent practice throughout China, arguing that a similar trend would not likely meet with equal success in Europe. Arguing that European woman would not agree to self-mutilation for the sake of aesthetics, “E” writes,

So weit wie die chinesischen Damen haben aber die Europäerinnen den Gehorsam gegen die Gesetze irgend einer Beherrscherin der Mode doch noch nicht getrieben; ein Beispiel muthwilliger Verstümmelung irgend eines Gliedes ist uns noch nicht bekannt, es sei denn die der Märchenwelt angehörige Erzählung ‘vom gläsernen Pantoffel’, die sich variiert in China täglich wiederholt.<sup>131</sup>

The article then explains how trends are established and what makes them successful. According to “E,” when a well-known and influential woman wears something, other women feel compelled to follow her example. “E” traces the origins of foot binding to such willing practices of mimicry, explaining how it all began at the court of a beautiful queen. According to “E,” one day, the king came across a woman looking lost and confused outside of his kingdom walls. He asked her who she was and where she came from, to which she replied that she no longer knew since her big feet had just carried her too far away from home: “sie wisse es selbst nicht, ihre großen Füße hätten sie gegen ihren Willen aus ihren Gemächern getragen.”<sup>132</sup> The story then claims that the king worried about this same fate befalling his wife and, as a way to protect her, had her feet bound to restrict her mobility and prevent her from wandering away from home and

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<sup>130</sup> “Die kleinen Füße der chineschen Frauen,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, February 1863, 47. Translation: “The small feet of Chinese women.”

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. Translation: “The European women have not, however, taken their obedience to the keepers of fashion trends to such an extreme as Chinese women have. We know of no examples of such voluntary disfigurements of a body part, barring the example of the ‘glass slipper’ found in the world of fairy tales, one that is daily reenacted in various incarnations in China.”

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

losing herself in the world. Consequently, so as not to be alone in her state of bound feet, the queen declared it a fashion trend and saw to it that other women followed in her proverbial footsteps. The women of her kingdom obliged and thus centuries of women binding their feet followed. The author concludes that such a trend would never take hold and last for as long in Europe as it has in China:

Die Geschichte meldet nicht, ob die Kaiserin sehr erfreut war von diesem Liebesbeweise ihres Gatten, wenigstens machte sie zum bösen Spiele gute Miene und erhob zum unumstößlichen Gesetze der Mode, dass jede Dame von Distinction kleine oder besser verstümmelte Füße haben müsse. Wäre jemals in Europa eine solche Mode aufgetaucht, so würde dies zwar höchst traurig, aber doch nicht von so nachhaltiger Wirkung gewesen sein wie in China, wo alles stereotyp ist und man nicht wie bei uns hoffen kann, nach kurzer Zeit von der Thyrannei erlöst zu werden.<sup>133</sup>

Such articles present (Western) European cultures as more enlightened and less likely to succumb to the tyrannical ruling of an authority figure. Unlike the Chinese women, who, according to “E,” are submissive and easily manipulated, European women are not as easily coerced into following a trend that came at a cost to their well-being. First, this logic overlooks the practice of tight-lacing and corseting,<sup>134</sup> which was popular in Europe at the time, and, second, assumes that the European woman has a higher ability to reason and assert herself than does her Asian counterpart. This line of thinking reflects the colonial worldview that was common in Western nations such as Germany and France at the time and that was supported and disseminated by the popular press. Here the

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid. Translation: “The story does not reveal whether the queen appreciated this token of her husband’s love, but she did spin it to her advantage by declaring it the undisputable law of fashion that every woman of distinction must have small or preferably mutilated feet. Were there ever such a trend in Europe, it would be equally sad but unlikely to have lasted for as long as it has in China, where everything is done according to the status quo and where one cannot hope to be released from the clutches of a tyranny as quickly as one can here.”

<sup>134</sup> I will return to corseting and tight-lacing in chapter three, providing a historical overview of the practice as well as an analysis of how corseting and tight-lacing figured into the discourse on proper femininity in *Der Bazar* and in the texts by the women writers of this study.

“imagined community” created by *Der Bazar* extends to see women of all European nations as united in their differentiation from the women of Asian cultures.

In his article “Narrating Empire: ‘Die Gartenlaube’ and Germany’s Nineteenth-Century Liberal Expansionism,” Matthew Fitzpatrick points to the articulation of colonial ideas and worldviews in popular magazines of the time. He argues that family magazines such as *Die Gartenlaube*, which claimed to be apolitical, were no less culpable of racist and imperialist propaganda than explicitly political publications. He references Homi K. Bhabha in arguing that “ostensibly apolitical textual forms, periodicals, novels, and artworks offered up a portrait of the imagined colonial periphery that confirmed the impressionistic understanding of colonies held by the European reading public whilst shaping and manipulating this understanding.”<sup>135</sup> Articles such as the above cited one on Chinese foot binding provide examples of how the German fashion magazine *Der Bazar* contributed to the political and cultural discourses surrounding race and class relations, echoing colonial ideology and perpetuating imperialist thinking.

Further examples are provided by articles such as “Ein Gottesdienst in Tibet”<sup>136</sup> (A religious service in Tibet) and “Die öffentlichen Bäder in der Türkei” (The public baths of Turkey), focusing on the differences between the civilized and cultured European nations versus the unrefined and ignorant non-Western “Other.”<sup>137</sup> Articles such as “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar” (The crinoline in Madagascar) serve the same function by highlighting how European cultural exports have served the “primitive” and

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<sup>135</sup> Matthew Fitzpatrick, “Narrating Empire: ‘Die Gartenlaube’ and Germany’s Nineteenth-Century Liberal Expansionism,” *German Studies Review* 30, no.1 (2007): 100.

<sup>136</sup> “Ein Gottesdienst in Tibet” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, March 1863, 80.

<sup>137</sup> “Die öffentlichen Bäder in der Türkei” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, April 1863, 106.

“lacking” cultures of non-Western nations by introducing them to Western goods and customs.<sup>138</sup> In “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar,” the same anonymous “E” reports how the king and queen of France sent a package of goods to the royal family of Madagascar as a sign of goodwill and friendship. The goods were received most enthusiastically, especially the crinoline, which was welcomed by the princess of Madagascar and declared the new fashion trend for the country. The women of Madagascar, however, having no experience with wearing a crinoline, foolishly layered them on the outside of their outfits, deeming the “iron cages” too beautiful to be hidden below the fabrics of their skirts:

Eine der königlichen Prinzessinnen hat nun die Gesetze der Mode auf Madagascar dahin festgestellt, daß die Crinoline von ihr und allen Damen, welche dieselbe annehmen, nicht unter, sondern über den Kleidern getragen wird, indem Ihre ebenholzfarbene Hoheit den aus Paris gesandten ‘Käfig’ für viel zu schön und wunderbar erachtet, um ihn den Blicken der Welt neidisch zu entziehen. Ländlich, sittlich.<sup>139</sup>

Despite the confusion, “E” concludes that these goods, sent with the intention of teaching the African women about European fashion and customs, did not fail in their mission: “Sie sind gesandt zu dem Zwecke, den schwarzen Schönheiten einen Begriff von der europäischen Mode beizubringen, vielleicht ihnen auch Geschmack dafür einzuflößen, und diese Absicht scheint nicht verfehlt zu sein.”<sup>140</sup> In other words, despite the African women’s ignorance as to how to incorporate the Western fashion accessory

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<sup>138</sup> “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, February 1863, 63.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. Translation: “One princess has thus established the fashion in Madagascar that every woman, who dons the crinoline, does so over and not underneath her clothing. This ebony princess deemed the ‘cage’ she received from Paris much too beautiful and spectacular to hide it from the envious eyes of the world. To each their own.”

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. Translation: “They were sent with the intention of teaching these black beauties about the fashions of Europe, and to even instill an appreciation thereof in them, and they seem not to have failed in their mission to do so.”

into their outfits, the purpose of the French king and queen's mission was accomplished in that it demonstrated to the African royalty the beauty and bounty of the Western world.

Stories and reports such as these not only portray the "Other" as more vulgar, primitive, and naïve, they also tend to include a sexuality and eroticism seldom present in articles about German, Austrian, or even French women. The crinoline, for instance, is a garment worn underneath a woman's robes to hide the body from the waist down while simultaneously drawing attention to a woman's secondary sexual characteristics: her full hips as emphasized by the crinoline, and her breasts, as emphasized by the corset. Wearing the crinoline on the *outside* of one's dress (as the princess of Madagascar is said to have done) not only shows one's ignorance about fashion but also signals a perversion and primitivism that further marked non-German cultures as inferior and uncivilized in the eyes of *Der Bazar's* readership.

Another striking example of the sexualized and immodest foreign woman is found in the image of a Neapolitan fisherwoman in the January 1878 edition of *Der Bazar*.<sup>141</sup> The image depicts an Italian fisherwoman stepping out of the water while carrying a basket of freshly caught fish. The water behind her is turbulent and the woman herself looks disheveled and unkempt. In striking contrast to the images of French or German women who are tightly corseted and usually covered in fabric from head to toe, this woman walks forward with her skirts hiked up to her knees and her blouse falling off her left shoulder low enough to expose her left breast. This presents an unexpected example of nudity that stands in stark contrast to the majority of the images found in the magazine. The eroticized depiction of the Neapolitan woman points to the difference in perception

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<sup>141</sup> "Neapolitanisches Fischermädchen," *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, January 1878.

regarding the German and French woman compared to her more overtly sexualized foreign counterpart.

As Fitzpatrick notes in his case study of *Die Gartenlaube*, “racial hierarchies were common . . . and were often little more than vulgarizations of anthropological assumptions laid bare in thumb-nail sketches of the population of a region, seen for example in sweeping statements.”<sup>142</sup> These “sweeping statements” are present in all of the above presented examples: Chinese women are grouped together as being meek, subordinate, and easily manipulated; the African women of Madagascar are simple-minded and unrefined; the Neapolitan woman (in this case presumably representative of all Italian peasant women) is erotic and unabashed.

Other nationalities are also reduced to simple stereotypes and presented as imitable personas for costume balls and masquerades; dresses resembling folk costumes of other nations, such as that of the “Griechin” (Greek woman) or the “Türkin” (Turkish woman) shown in an 1881 issue of *Der Bazar* offer the German reader the ability temporarily to assume that identity and the many stereotypes it carries.<sup>143</sup> The magazine’s feature on costumes, moreover, conflates the idea of nationality with ethnicity and even class belonging, as the costumes of “Griechin” and “Türkin” are presented alongside those of a “Zigeunerin” (gypsy) and “Milchmädchen” (milk maid) in a collection of the exotic and the Other.<sup>144</sup> The selection of costumes further highlights how the imagined community created by *Der Bazar* included Western European women of the middle to

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<sup>142</sup> Fitzpatrick, 106.

<sup>143</sup> The illustrations titled “Griechin,” and “Türkin,” appeared alongside other ethnic sketches such as that of “Zigeunerin” in *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, January 1878.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.



upper class while excluding working women (the milk maid) along with women of Eastern cultures. In contrast, as the following section will demonstrate, the women writers “writing back” to the fashion and magazine industry of their time focused their presentation of gender roles in a more universal light; woman as subject was less confined to national identity and more heavily defined by her role in opposition to man.

#### **IV. Women Writers and their Response to the Construct of the “German” Woman**

If the magazine industry of the nineteenth century was establishing and promoting what it meant to be German, female, and of the middle class, then women writers were responding with their own take on what connoted femininity and national identity in their writings. Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Louise Otto spent considerable portions of their oeuvre reflecting on contemporary understandings of femininity, what it meant to be a “woman,” specifically a German or Austrian woman. This is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in Rosa Mayreder’s short story *Sein Ideal* (His Ideal).<sup>145</sup> Written from the perspective of a male narrator, the story presents through his eyes an idealized version of womanhood in a nineteenth-century middle-class setting. The narrator, only referred to as “Herr Müller,” meets his future wife, Emilie, at a ball and constructs an entire story about her personality and life’s ambitions without having exchanged a word with her. He imagines her to be the pinnacle of idealized womanhood (as he understands it), describing her as a “zarte Gestalt” (delicate figure), “reizend” (charming), full of “mädchenhafter Scheu” (girlish shyness), although “nicht gerade

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<sup>145</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Sein Ideal* (1897).

geistreich” (not particularly intelligent).<sup>146</sup> Not surprisingly, he is disappointed to discover that her personality and outlook on domestic and married life do not fit with the fantasy he has concocted. This discovery, however, comes too late; the two are already married and have a child together.

With this story, Mayreder constructs a male narrator that stands as representative of mainstream ideology on class and gender. The fact that we never get to know him as anything other than “Herr Müller” prevents any sort of identification with him as an individual. He is and remains the faceless *bourgeois* from beginning to the end of the story. Through him, Mayreder satirizes the unrealistic expectations placed on a marriage between two strangers and the naïve characterization of an individual based on her gender and class belonging. She mocks the notion of presuming to know a woman based on her race, class, and appearance. Emilie falls short of her husband’s fantasies and expectations but the tragedy lies in the fact that she never presented herself as being any different from what she is. His disappointment comes not from realizing that his wife pretended to be someone she is not, but from his unrealistic expectations based on his understanding of womanhood as presented to him by his culture and class. His visions of femininity are divorced from real interactions with members of the opposite sex and informed by romanticized constructions of womanhood as offered by the literature and popular culture of his time. Moreover, the qualities that charm Herr Müller during his courtship of Emilie are the same character traits that frustrate and annoy him once the two are married. Mayreder’s story points to the often contradictory expectations of a women courted and a woman “won.” The same qualities that are seductive and appealing in an unmarried woman do not translate to qualities revered in a wife and mother.

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

Mayreder's story thus presents an understanding of German femininity and domesticity that responds to the images of womanhood presented in *Der Bazar* with a more critical and nuanced tone. While articles such as "Die kleinen Füße der chineschen Frauen" and "Die Crinoline auf Madagascar" portray German women as cultured, autonomous, enlightened, and independent, narratives such as *Sein Ideal* offer a more somber look at the role assigned to the German woman. In addition to presenting the illusion of perfect femininity from the perspective of the husband, Mayreder also offers a look at how society constructs and portrays similarly unrealistic images of masculinity by offering Emilie's take on her marriage. Like her husband, Emilie, too, comes into their marriage with specific expectations and preconceptions of how her spouse is to behave and perform his gender role. Emilie is no victim; she operates within the same matrix that influences her husband's understanding of gender and class roles. She, too, holds prejudices and misconceptions about the men and women around her. Emilie is portrayed as small-minded and flawed, petty in her treatment of their housekeeper, and ignorant in matters outside of the home and immediate surroundings. Mayreder moreover "writes back" to the images of femininity presented in *Der Bazar* by portraying Emilie as naïve and uninformed about the world (a matter leading to constant conflict between her and her husband), preferring to spend her time perusing her "Modejournal" than seeking enlightenment from more "serious" reading material.<sup>147</sup> In other words, Emilie, whose understandings of gender, class, and culture are formed by her readings of popular fashion magazines, is not very bright and does not inspire respect in her erudite husband. In the end, both Emilie and her husband are set up for disappointment and

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 6.

disillusionment. Mayreder's story presents the consequences of bringing together individuals that are previously kept in separate social spheres and offered little insight about the opposite sex outside of romanticized constructions of femininity and masculinity as presented by the popular press.

Although Mayreder offers a valid argument in her critique of the popular press and in her analysis of gender roles, she, too, contributes to the very phenomenon she is criticizing. Her figure Emilie is flat and uninspiring. She is a product of her environment, but she does not attempt to break out of the mold into which she is forced and does not question her allotted space in life. While the figure of Herr Müller is shown as growing over the course of the story, Emilie's character remains flat and unchanged. Herr Müller starts out as blinded by his love for Emilie, grows frustrated in their marriage, questions his expectations of his wife and their union, and attempts to formulate his thoughts on gender roles and his misinformed understanding of what constitutes femininity. Emilie, on the other hand, demonstrates little character growth and appears complacent with her assigned role despite providing ample clues as to her dissatisfaction.

Mayreder's portrayal of Emilie hints at an understanding of womanhood that was still colored and limited by the culture and context of the author's upbringing despite her valiant criticism of misogynist works by Weininger and Möbius that painted women as innately ignorant and inferior to men.<sup>148</sup> In her theoretical work *Zur Kritik der*

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<sup>148</sup> See Rosa Mayreder. *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1905). *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit* was her best-received work, published in 1905 as a response to Otto Weininger's misogynist text *Geschlecht und Charakter*. The essays within elaborate on issues taken up by the *Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein* (AÖVF), declare her theoretical standpoint, and react to influential writers of her time, especially ones focused on gender, such as Weininger, Goethe, Steiner, Marholm, Feuerbach, and Andreas-Salome to name a few. Weininger's work, to which she was directing her response with *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit*, became known primarily for exploring the question of whether women have souls. Similarly influential on Mayreder's work was Paul Möbius' 1904 work *Über den psychologischen Schwachsinn des Weibes*, and Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso's musings on women as closer related

*Weiblichkeit* (translated as *A Survey of the Woman Problem*), Mayreder outlines three different “types” of women. These are “der Typus der erotischen Unterordnung” (the erotic submissive type), “die Frauen der Mutterschaft mit egoistisch-frigider Grundnote” (the maternal and egoistic-frigid type), and “die Männerhasserinnen” (the man hater type).<sup>149</sup> Her figure of Emilie reads much like a caricature of the “erotic submissive type,” charming Herr Müller with her looks and sexual appeal and settling into a life of submissive obedience to her husband. The fact that, throughout the story, the two remain known by their monikers of mismatched register (Emilie and *Herr* Müller) serves further to emphasize the inequality in their relationship. In her explanation of the “erotic submissive type” Mayreder writes that this type of woman is characterized by a fervent embrace of traditional “feminine” qualities, such as submissiveness, dependence, fragility, and a preoccupation with beauty and appearances. “Der Mann ist ihr Inhalt, ihr Oberhaupt, ihr Eigentümer; und die Vorstellung der Unterwerfung unter seine körperliche und geistige Herrschaft löst bei ihnen die erotische Lustempfindung aus,”<sup>150</sup> adds Mayreder. She calls these women “Schwätzerinnen”<sup>151</sup> (gabby) and “Vogel – und Puppennaturen”<sup>152</sup> (bird brained and doll like). Mayreder’s classifications of the common

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to animals than men. But despite this objection to the classification of woman as animalistic and simple-minded, Mayreder herself casts stereotypical categories over the members of her sex with her chapter on the typography of women (categorizing all women as belonging to one of three different types; “der Typus der erotischen Unterordnung” (the erotic submissive type), “die Frauen der Mutterschaft mit egoistisch-frigider Grundnote” (the maternal and egoistic-frigid type), and “die Männerhasserinnen” (the man hater type). 118-122.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 116. Translation: “Man is her being, her superior, her master, and the mere thought of submission to his physical and spiritual domination evokes in her feelings of eroticism and desire”.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 119.

woman thus rely as much on stereotypes and clichés as the writings of the male writers she so adamantly criticizes. The reader does not come to know Emilie outside of this flat and static representation of the “erotic submissive” type, while her husband is presented as the more inquisitive and critical of the two. In the end, both characters are unhappy and unsettled in their marriage. Mayreder’s story shows the myriad ways in which a relationship can falter when the two partners’ knowledge of each another is mainly informed by gendered and cultural clichés.

A similar dystopian theme runs throughout Mayreder’s only drama *Anda Renata. Mysterium in zwei Teilen und zwölf Bildern* (*Anda Renata. Mystery in Twelve Acts and Twelve Scenes*).<sup>153</sup> As Mayreder’s only drama and longest work, *Anda Renata* represents an outpouring of ideas and theories on gender and women’s roles in society. The drama is written in rhyme, mirroring Goethe’s famous *Faust* story in narrative construction and plot elements. A young female protagonist goes out into the world and encounters witch hunts, tackles questions of morality and good versus evil, deals with an unwanted pregnancy and ultimately infanticide, accompanied by a devil figure cloaked as a domesticated animal. While Faust’s devil takes on the form of a black poodle, Anda’s devil is a cat named Ashmedai, who talks to her much as Mephistopheles does with Faust.

Mayreder’s female Faust encounters obstacles that her male counterpart is spared due to the social freedom granted to his class and gender. Anda is constantly confronted with the social expectations placed on women, namely to stay close to home, to remain “innocent” and uneducated, and to defer to her male “keepers” for important life decisions. Anda, however, rebels against this kind of life, as is demonstrated in an early

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<sup>153</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Anda Renata. Mysterium in zwei Teilen und zwölf Bildern* (Vienna: Krey, 1934).

scene between Anda and a council of elders. The elders are trying to dissuade her from her journey, suggesting she accept the proverbial (and in this case, a literal) veil over her eyes as she leaves to go out into the world. Anda refuses and steps out into the world with her eyes wide open. Not surprisingly, the story of her awakening does not lead to a happy ending any more than the marriage between Herr Müller and Emilie does. At the end of the story, Anda resembles more closely the figure of Gretchen in Goethe's story than she does Faust. Pregnant, alone, and excluded from her family and community, she gives her baby away to a witch, endures imprisonment, and eventually dies. She is repeatedly confronted with bourgeois ideology such as her mother's words "Ein Mann ist nie der Schuldige, wo sich / Die Weiblichkeit entzweit mit Brauch und Sitte,"<sup>154</sup> or the witch's prophecy of "Bleibt man in vorgeschriebenen Züchten, / Hat man kein großes Publikum; / Doch ißt man von verbotenen Früchten, / Gelangt man bald zu Glück und Ruhm. / Nur müsst Ihr weislich es verschweigen, / Der Schein, der ist des Weibes Wert; / Wollt Ihr zum höchsten Preise steigen, / Verneint, was Ihr geheim begehrt."<sup>155</sup>

Mayreder concludes the story with her intended message in the epilogue. She writes, "Das Misslingen der magischen Handlung bedeutet in Anda's Fall: Wenn ein neues Menschentum sich Bahn brechen soll, muß es über das Alte hinausschreiten – symbolisch ausgedrückt: der Stern des Menschen muß zerbrechen, um in neuer Gestalt

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 27. Translation: "A man is never at fault where / femininity breaks with tradition and custom."

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 82. Translation: "When one adheres to the dictated customs / one has no audience / but when one eats from the forbidden fruit / one quickly acquires fortune and a reputation / Only it is best to deny it / Appearance; that is the virtue of woman / If you want to reach the highest fortune / deny that which you desire."

aufzugehen.”<sup>156</sup> She argues that when it comes to a break with tradition in gender roles, woman’s path is always more difficult than man’s: “Der Widerstand gegen das Ueberschreiten der häuslichen Tradition durch das Weib hat sich immer in harten Vorurteilen geäußert; die christlich-asketische Feindschaft gegen sinnliche Regungen äußerte sich gegen das Weib noch fantastischer als gegen den Mann.”<sup>157</sup> In other words, the Christian-informed ideology on gender roles is much more rigid and unyielding when it comes to controlling women and the spaces they occupy. Mayreder furthermore points to the early modern witch trials as some of the earliest manifestations of gender oppression, naming the infamous *Hexenhammer*<sup>158</sup> as an example of how women suspected of breaking with tradition were persecuted and eradicated. She refers to the “Hexe” (witch) as the original “Emanzipierte” (emancipated woman), a category that applied to any woman challenging the traditional life trajectory and the “genehmigten Typus des Weibes” (approved model of womanhood).<sup>159</sup>

Despite Mayreder’s own contribution to gender stereotyping as she reduces women to three oversimplified types in her typology of womanhood, the author offers a critique of the status quo that challenges the images of femininity presented in *Der Bazar*.

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 239. Translation: “The failing of the mystical plot in Anda’s case means this: to pave the way for a new way of being, humanity must first outgrow the old one. Symbolically said: the star of humanity must burst before it can take on a new form.”

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 241. Translation: “Opposition to women resisting domesticity has always been expressed through harsh prejudices; the Christian-ascetic animosity against matters of the flesh has always been countered more fanatically in women than in men.”

<sup>158</sup> See Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). The “Hexenhammer” (hammer of the witches), also known as the *Malleus Maleficarum* in the original Latin, was written in 1486 by Heinrich Kramer, an inquisitor of the Catholic Church, and published in 1487 in Germany. The text outlined the various ways a witch can be identified and persecuted. It also contains anecdotes about the wrong-doings of women accused of being witches. The text is a misogynistic work that inspired much of the witch craze of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>159</sup> Mayreder, *Anda Renata*, 242.



Anda Renata, in particular, longs to travel, experience the world, and find her purpose in life outside of her home and the marriage imposed on her by her family. The adventure-seeking and independently-minded Anda stands in stark contrast to the tamed and domesticated female figures in *Der Bazar*. While articles in *Der Bazar* argued for a reading of the German woman as superior and more independent than her Chinese or African counterpart, Mayreder's texts challenge that view and points to the many ways in which women were deprived of a voice and punished for their desire to escape the confines of family and domesticity.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach similarly uses her works to challenge the view that German women occupy a superior space to that of their foreign counterparts, as presented in magazines such as *Der Bazar*. Ebner-Eschenbach focuses on class as the lens through which she conducts her social analysis. One of her best-known stories, *Das Gemeindegeld* (Their Pavel), tells the story of an orphaned sister and brother and their fate as the charges of their community. The world she paints is harsh and unforgiving for children of the underclass living under the shadows cast by their criminal parents. Gender also figures into the fate of the two siblings, as the boy, Pavel, is left to work and fend for himself in the village, while his younger sister, Milada, is taken under the wing of the local baroness and sent to be raised in a convent. As a result, Pavel is exposed to the harsh realities of everyday life in his community while his sister is kept innocent and "pure" under the auspices of the nuns. *Das Gemeindegeld* is filled with examples of how women and men are prepared for different roles in life, emphasizing, much like Mayreder's texts, that women are to be subservient and obedient. In one poignant

example comparing little girls in the village with the horses in the stable, Ebner-Eschenbach writes:

In den Häusern und vor den Häusern flochten die Mütter den Mädchen die Haare mit roten Bändchen ein, und in den Ställen taten die Bauernburschen dasselbe an den Mähnen ihrer Rosse. Da entstanden eine Unzahl dünner Zöpflein, so steif wie Draht, die den Köpfen der Mädchen und den Hälsen der Pferde etwas sehr Nettes und Gutgehaltenes gaben.<sup>160</sup>

In other words, Ebner-Eschenbach highlights the misogynist discourses of her time, linking women to animals (which Mayreder addressed in the aforementioned *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit*) and drawing attention to the way such understandings of gender roles were enforced by society. As in the works of Mayreder and Otto, education is offered as the path to betterment, be it for women or both genders of the lower classes.

In *Das Gemeindekind*, Pavel finally makes a successful life for himself in the village with the guidance and mentorship of the local school teacher. When his beloved mentor moves away, he leaves Pavel with these parting words of advice that stress the importance of learning and reading: “Ferner, verlerne das Lesen nicht. . . . wenn du aber alles weißt, was in ihnen steht, und alles tust, was sie dir anraten, dann weißt du viel und wirst gut fahren. Lies sie, lies sie immer, und wenn du mit dem sechsten fertig bist, fang mit dem ersten wieder an.”<sup>161</sup> Books are touted as the way to better understanding the world, to successfully navigate society, and as an inexhaustible resource.

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<sup>160</sup> Marie von Ebner Eschenbach, *Das Gemeindekind* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1985), 127. Translation: “In their homes and in front of their homes, mothers were braiding red ribbons into their daughters’ hair, just as the farm boys were doing with their horses’ manes inside of the barns. And so there were infinite little braids, stiff as wire, adorning the heads of little girls and the necks of horses, giving them something quite pleasant in appearance.”

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 171. Translation: “Moreover, do not forget to read . . . when you know everything that is to be found in them [books], and when you do everything that they tell you to do, then you will know much and do well. Read them, read them always, and when you are done with the sixth one, then start over with the first.”

This theme of education and reading is present in many of Ebner-Eschenbach's writings. In *Lotti, die Uhrmacherin* (Lotti, the watchmaker) the protagonist praises books as inexhaustible: "Übrigens – ein gutes Buch, einen guten Freund, die lernt man nicht aus. Ein weises Buch ist ebenso unergründlich wie ein großes Menschenherz."<sup>162</sup> While Lotti is portrayed as an intelligent woman, her rival in love, Agathe Halwig, is described as simple and as almost childlike. Books, reading, and writing are used to communicate these coded traits; Agathe is described as writing a "zierlichen kleinen Brief" (delicate little letter) while Lotti worries that she will overwhelm her with her "schwerfälligen und altmodischen Schrift" (heavy and antiquated writing).<sup>163</sup> And while Lotti's writing, just like her values and mannerisms, is supposed to represent intelligence, understanding, and experience, Agathe's inconsequential letter writing and delicate penmanship reinforce the image of the "modern" yet superficial woman.

It is noteworthy that Agathe is endowed with the "gift" of beauty and athleticism (she is an avid tennis player) while Lotti is described as being plain and not interested in the physicality of her body. Her preoccupation lies with matters of the mind. Where Agathe is physically fit, Lotti is intellectually agile. In many ways, Ebner-Eschenbach constructs a dichotomy of physicality versus intellect, pitting the two against each other, one presented as noble and respectable but the other as the more socially apt and appreciated. That is, the beautiful and active Agathe gains admiration far more easily than the intelligent yet often overlooked Lotti.

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<sup>162</sup> Marie von Ebner Eschenbach, *Lotti, die Uhrmacherin* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999), 14. Translation: "By the way, a good book, like a good friend, is something one never can exhaust. A wise book is as bottomless as a full heart."

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 66.

This juxtaposition of the mobile woman versus the intellectual woman (often presented as irreconcilable polarities) is found in Ebner-Eschenbach's story *Komtesse Muschi* as well. Countess Muschi is a "Sportskomtesse" who abandons the traditional ways of performing femininity, preferring instead masculine coded behavior and activities. She hunts, rides horses, loves the outdoors, and is often chastised by her parents and friends for not being more feminine in her demeanor. In the end, the "Sportskomtesse" wins her love interest as a friend but loses him as a husband, suggesting that masculine women can assume the role of companion and confidant but never lover or wife.

In addition to her love of the outdoors and of athletic pursuits, Muschi describes her vehement disdain of reading and book learning while professing not to have any traditional "female" skills such as drawing, needle-working, or playing a musical instrument. Her foil, Clara, is described as an avid reader and hailed for her skills in embroidery and all things domestic. The story ends with Clara marrying Muschi's love interest while the latter is resigned to a solitary life. As courtship and marriage are the barometers by which social success for women in nineteenth-century novels is typically measured, we can infer which character traits are deemed more suitable to finding social acceptance and recognition by looking at which figure achieves the "ultimate success" of matrimony.

In the end, the book-loving Clara is more socially accepted and integrated than the physically active Muschi in *Komtesse Muschi*. The more physically agile Agathe fares better in *Lotti, die Uhrmacherin*, while the book savvy Lotti struggles to find love and happiness. Although these may sound like contradictory examples, they are not. What

connects both Clara and Agathe is their femininity; they are the paragons of domesticity. By contrast, Lotti and Muschi stand out with their claim to independence and their non-conformity, be it in the realm of sports and physical activity or in the realm of education and matters of the mind. I will return to the subject of physical mobility in chapter three of this dissertation and I will address the concept of education as vehicle for social mobility for women in chapter five of this dissertation. Although certain forms of physical activity (tennis, skating, “promenading,”) were socially accepted and perceived as non-threatening to the social order of the time, other, more masculine-coded physical activities, such as horseback riding and hunting, were read as subversive and challenging to the status quo. Similarly, pursuits of intellect are admirable when kept in moderation and limited to “feminine” tasks such as playing an instrument or learning a foreign language. The desire to educate oneself beyond this socially accepted level is read as threatening the stability of the social order of the nineteenth-century. Both Lotti and Muschi fall outside of the social norm in that they are examples of athleticism or book learning taken to an extreme.

The above examples of German womanhood as presented in the works of Ebner-Eschenbach demonstrate that when it came to gender and idealized femininity, the author did not rely on a foreign “Other” to define and set her parameters. Ebner-Eschenbach’s fiction relies on juxtapositions between male and female characters and the disparate social expectations placed on the two as a way to offer social critique. While fashion magazines such as *Der Bazar* partook in an international relationship with fashion magazines of other cultures and invoked images and descriptions of foreign cultures and customs as a way to define the national and the local, the women writers presented here

focused their works on the social and gender differences within the boundaries of their immediate surroundings. *Der Bazar* offered its readership stories idealizing the German woman as a paragon of refined femininity and motherhood. Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach, in contrast, presented a more nuanced and critical view of the role assigned to German wives and mothers, thus challenging the images found in *Der Bazar*.

## **V. Conclusion**

When comparing the writings in *Der Bazar* and the ways in which these texts attempted to shape a collective understanding of national identity and, by extension, a public consciousness of what constituted the “German” woman, we can conclude the following: the fashion magazines presented an image of womanhood contingent on class and national belonging. Although dynamic and at times unfocused, the idea of a “German” woman did exist and she was predominantly created through contrasts and differentiations from her foreign counterpart. At times drastically different from women of other cultures, while at other times different only in subtle ways, the ideal German woman was nonetheless presented as having a distinct “German” way of being.

The women writers of the time, however, focused their writings on a more universal image of womanhood that was less steeped in nationality and class belonging and more grounded in a juxtaposition of woman versus man. Their writings, although hinting at differences between women of certain nationalities and cultures, did not direct the same kind of attention to these cultural differences as they did to gender and class disparities. Their works, too, use generalities and stereotypes in creating an image of “woman” as a universal subject, relying on arguments that would be described as

essentialist and reductionist by the second wave feminist movement to come. Their works do, however, provide an alternate lens through which to view the role of women at a time when magazines and the fashion industry had specific instructions for how gender and class roles were to be understood and performed. The following chapters will analyze this dialogue between the images presented within *Der Bazar* and the constructions of femininity offered by the women writers of this study with a focus on physical mobility and the fashion and clothing items symbolic of movement, or, in some cases, immobility. Chapter three looks at the corset and the crinoline in its relationship to the physical mobility of woman, investigating first how *Der Bazar* presented these items and then offering the voices of Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach as they “wrote back.” Chapter four provides a similar analysis with the focus on the shoe and horseback riding attire in their relationship to women’s geographical mobility. Last, chapter five continues the analysis of women’s education as introduced in this chapter with the examples from Ebner-Eschenbach’s fiction and investigates the relationship between women’s schooling and social mobility.

### Chapter Three: On Physical (Im)Mobility, the Corset, and the Crinoline

#### I. Fashion: Shaping Women, Shaping Gender Roles

The corset and the crinoline played a significant role in the debates surrounding women's enfranchisement and social and personal mobility during the second half of the nineteenth century. These two items were not only mainstays of women's clothing at that time; they also figured into the writings surrounding the women's movement, in the discourses on what it meant to be a nineteenth-century woman, and in the plethora of images and visual materials that enforced an ideology of class, gender, and sexuality familiar to most. As ubiquitous as these fashion accessories were, it comes as no surprise that there is a host of literature analyzing the corset or the function of the crinoline within modern scholarship. Costume historians and humanities scholars have written at length about them, and any work on nineteenth-century fashion would be amiss without at least a mention of these ever-present components of women's dress.

Some of the seminal works on corseting and the crinoline include, but are not limited to, Leigh Summer's *Bound To Please*,<sup>164</sup> Norah Waugh's *Corsets and Crinolines*,<sup>165</sup> Valerie Steele's *The Corset*,<sup>166</sup> and David Kunzle's *Fashion and Fetishism*.<sup>167</sup> These works range in interpretation from denouncing the corset as harmful and oppressive to praising it as feminist and empowering. What unites most of the scholarship on corseting, and fashion in general, is not the resulting interpretation of the

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<sup>164</sup> See Leigh Summer, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (New York: Berg, 2001).

<sup>165</sup> See Norah Waugh, *Corsets and Crinolines* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1954).

<sup>166</sup> See Valerie Steele, *The Corset. A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

<sup>167</sup> See David Kunzle, *Fashion and Fetishism. A Social History of the Corset, Tight-Lacing and Other Forms of Body-Sculpture in the West* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982).



fashion item in question but the methodology employed. The majority of fashion analyses fall into two categories: the author either engages in a critique from a modern perspective looking back on a given time period's fashion system as a way to deconstruct gender and class structures, or, as Roland Barthes has done in *The Fashion System*, garments are analyzed as a system of codes and the translation thereof forms the crux of the analysis. Writers such as Leigh Summers, author of *Bound to Please*, and Carol Mattingly, author of the study on nineteenth-century women orators, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, opt for a third approach that does not study fashion merely as a system of codes or read it through the lens of modern scholarship. Rather, by looking at first-hand accounts and primary materials, they explore how fashion trends were deconstructed and presented *within* a given time and space. By looking at how certain items or trends were presented within the texts and images circulating at that time, Summers and Mattingly demonstrate how fashion played a tangible role in the shaping of the social and political framework of a given culture.

My work in this chapter (and in this dissertation as a whole) aims to do the same thing: by looking at how fashion items, and in particular the corset and the crinoline, were presented within the texts and images of the popular German women's magazine *Der Bazar* and within the writings of Rosa Mayreder, Louise Otto, and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, I show how gender, class, and sexuality were enforced through the discourses surrounding these accouterments at the time of their implementation. Moreover, I am interested in the dialogue that can be traced between the fashion world as represented by *Der Bazar* and the writings of women writers for a presumably female audience. Many texts analyzing the corset rely on medical authorities to propose what

corseting might have been like for the wearer, providing medical information (from an outside perspective) on what the corset did to the body. My research is focused on how the corset and the crinoline were represented by those operating within the fashion and culture industry of the time as well as by those experiencing those fashions first hand. I will first present a description of the corset and the crinoline (what it was and who it served), then look at how these items figured in the texts and images of *Der Bazar*, and last, explore how these same topics were treated by the women writers of this study.

## **II. The Corset and the Crinoline: Form and Function**

The corset is in its most basic form a garment worn over one's midsection to shape and help achieve the appearance of a smaller waist. This shaping of the waist, in turn, emphasizes the bust and hips, a woman's secondary sexual characteristics. When it originated in the sixteenth century, it was called a "pair of bodys" or simply "body" in English and "corps" in French.<sup>168</sup> Early corsets were made of whalebone, horn, and buckram, and originated in Spain and Italy.<sup>169</sup> They eventually waned in popularity but made a triumphant return during the nineteenth century, the time period most widely associated with the corset.<sup>170</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, corsets were made of whalebone and were predominantly white in color and worn underneath clothing, functioning mainly through the suggestion of their presence. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, corsets became part of an overt fashion statement; colorfully dyed, elaborately decorated, and worn on the outside where they could be

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<sup>168</sup> Waugh, 19.

<sup>169</sup> Steele, 7.

<sup>170</sup> Kunzle, 4.

shown off. Corsets were worn by women of all ages, including by female children, and by members of all social classes. Running the gamut of sizes, level of sophistication, craftsmanship, and cost, corsets in varying incarnations encased the bodies of most Western women regardless of age or class belonging.

A small fraction of those wearing a corset engaged in the more extreme practice of tight-lacing. According to Kunzle, tight-lacing was predominantly a lower middle to lower class phenomenon and was undertaken by both men and women.<sup>171</sup> Tight-lacing is the extreme and systematic tightening of a rigid corset meant to reduce the wearer's waist size permanently. Whereas corseting is a fashion trend, tight-lacing is a type of body modification that can happen either in conjunction with fashion or in rejection thereof, since it is the very nature of it being a marginal and exclusionary practice that lends tight-lacing its cult attraction. In terms of distinguishing tight-lacing from regular corseting, Kunzle argues that it is not the size achieved as much as the intent behind the practice that matters: "The most useful definition of tight-lacing is not numerical but rather the point at which a waist attracted attention and was known by its perpetuator to do so."<sup>172</sup> Thus, tight-lacing was a more ostentatious and extreme form of corseting that was practiced in conjunction with corseting. It is important to recognize that not all who corseted were in fact tight-lacing, whereas all who tight-laced used a stiff and rigid corset to do so.

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<sup>171</sup> See David Kunzle, "Dress Reform as Antifeminism: A Response to Helene E. Robert's 'The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman'" *Signs*. Vol. 2, No.3 (Spring 1977), 573.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 574.

During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the corset was complemented by the crinoline, a “steel cage” evolving out of the need to support the broad skirts fashionable at the time. As the circumference of the skirt grew, so did the demand for a structure and support-providing garment to be worn underneath all of those layers. Initially, a horsehair petticoat provided that support but as skirt dimensions increased, a sturdier structure was required. The horsehair petticoat was thus replaced with additional petticoats, some of which were enforced with cording and eventually whalebone. Then, in 1856, the design changed to one of a single cage-like petticoat no longer made of whalebone but of steel.<sup>173</sup> As a result, where the corset ended, the crinoline began, giving the female form an entirely manipulated appearance according to the fashion rules of the time. Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, the shape and curvature of the crinoline changed to accommodate the evolving fashions until it eventually lost favor with the fashion world and was replaced by petticoats simply made of stiffer fabrics once again. But during its almost half a century reign, the crinoline, just like the corset, played a key role in how the bourgeois woman moved, was perceived, and in how she related to her surrounding world.

One characteristic shared by both the corset and the crinoline was that they required additional help in dressing. The crinoline presented challenges due to its broad expanse and cage-like structure, while the corset stymied the wearer due to its elaborate back closure system. According to Louise Otto, only “älteren Damen und Dienstmädchen war es gestattet, Taillen zu tragen, die vorn geschlossen wurden.”<sup>174</sup> In other words,

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<sup>173</sup> Waugh, 93.

<sup>174</sup> Louise Otto, “Moden,” *Frauenleben Im Deutschen Reich* (Leipzig: Verlag von Moriz Schaefer, 1876).  
74. Translation: “older women and maids were allowed to wear waistlines that closed in the front.”

wearing a corset that deviated from the norm signified as an admission of age or class fallibility. Additional hands were also needed to free the wearer from these accouterments of fashion when they were to be removed. In the unfortunate cases where women could not escape their steel trappings quickly enough, they were reported to have died in accidents such as fires in enclosed public places after their highly flammable silk skirts ignited.<sup>175</sup> Thus, the corset and the crinoline not only functioned to enforce gender norms (a visibly overemphasized femininity),<sup>176</sup> they also affected how physically mobile women of the nineteenth century could be. As the following sections will demonstrate, their impact on women's mobility came to be more of a concern to sympathizers with the women's movement, whereas the appeal to aesthetics and culture dominated the discussions emanating from the fashion world.

### III. Fashion and the Quest for Women's Rights

In her work *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, Carol Mattingly describes how suffragettes of the time understood this complex relationship between fashion and women's roles and used the system to their advantage. She looks at how fashion was used as a tool in navigating certain social and political situations, both by those in favor of women's departure from traditional gender

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<sup>175</sup> Erika Thiel, *Geschichte des Kostüms, Die europäische Mode von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1980), 335.

<sup>176</sup> Although the corset is generally understood as a marker of feminine beauty, especially when paired with the crinoline to create that unmistakably nineteenth-century 'wasp-waist' silhouette, it was also worn by men in certain cases. Interestingly, it was military men and dandies who were most likely to be found corseting. But even with these examples of men opting for the corset to create a certain silhouette, the object remains nonetheless most closely linked to ideas of idealized and overly emphasized notions of femininity and female beauty. Due to the constraints of addressing such a manifold subject, I will be limiting my analysis to corseting as it relates to women and femininity.

roles and those in opposition. Regardless of which side was speaking, women's outward appearance and the clothes on their bodies figured prominently in discussions of politics and propriety.

When women appeared in public to speak, their garments fell under as much scrutiny as their words. As a result, mainstream magazines and newspapers reported on the event with mention of what the speaker was wearing rather than what she had argued. Headlines in American publications often read: "Petticoats and Pantaloons," "A Female in Breeches," "A Female in Pantaloons," "Corset-Strings and Suffrage," "The Corseted Crusade," "Politicians in Petticoats," "A Bustline Army of Crusaders," and "Petticoats at the Bar."<sup>177</sup> Corsets and crinolines became synonymous with proper femininity, and by extension, with woman's enforced identity as a beautiful object rather than a subject.

As demonstrated in chapter one, fashion operated on an international level and gender and class structures functioned beyond national lines. The close link between femininity, women's social roles, and clothing was equally discernable in the German *Der Bazar*, as I will demonstrate in subsequent sections of this chapter. Although Mattingly makes the following statement in regard to the American examples of her study, I argue that the same claims can be made about the status of women's role in Europe at the time: "because nineteenth-century women were so fully defined according to gender, and because, gender was based largely upon dress and appearance, women understood the importance of clothing in negotiating the rigid power structure that permitted them little access to public attention."<sup>178</sup> In other words, women learned to

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<sup>177</sup> Carol Mattingly, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 14-15.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

appreciate the role attributed to clothing and to find ways in which to use fashion and clothing to their advantage. Otto, Mayreder, and Ebner-Eschenbach demonstrate how German and Austrian women understood the importance of clothing just as well as their American sisters<sup>179</sup> and used fashion as a way to communicate information about the class and social status of the fictional characters in their works, as well as to make statements about their personal involvement in the women's movement and the often parallel clothing reform movement.

Throughout Europe and North America, groups of women were banding together to implement and promote the move away from long skirts and tight corsets as the only viable options for their sex. In Austria, Rosa Mayreder was a supporter of the dress reform movement, abandoning the corset at age nineteen and opting for loose, flowing robes thereafter.<sup>180</sup> Many of the images of this writer available to us today depict her in long, comfortably cut garments that suggest the absence of a corset or a crinoline. Those

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 5. For North American women, that sometimes meant eschewing the more radical styles of reform dress in order to appease their audience and to win favor with their readers or listeners. Mattingly explains how "the most impressive women rhetors effected a 'womanly' stance to disarm critics who accused them of being 'unsexed' and to assuage a public that feared a danger to family and society." Examples of this can be found in the number of women who adopted Quaker dress as part of their public speaking uniform, calling upon associations with religiosity and morality in order to mollify a potentially hostile audience. Women's rights activists presenting themselves in Quaker attire claimed to be doing 'God's work,' invoking religious rhetoric in both text and textile. In contrast, women such as Rosa Mayreder in Austria and Francis Wright in North America, who adopted the reform dress as a symbol of non-compliance, were often met with suspicion and disapproval.

<sup>180</sup> See Hilde Schmölzer, *Rosa Mayreder. Ein Leben Zwischen Wirklichkeit Und Utopie* (Vienna: Promedia, 2002).

taking a more radical departure from traditional garments forwent long skirts altogether and opted for loose cut trousers, in English colloquially dubbed “bloomers.”<sup>181</sup>

Another example of non-traditional dress was the “New Harmony Dress” as introduced by Francis Wright. Wright, a Scottish-born nineteenth-century writer and abolitionist, relocated to North America and founded the Nashoba Commune, fighting for women’s rights and social reform. The New Harmony Dress popular among commune members consisted of Turkish “harem” pants and a long straight knee-length tunic that was cinched at the waist.<sup>182</sup> Although this style of dress was designed for comfort and modesty, it quickly became synonymous with rebellion and “indelicate.”<sup>183</sup> The main problem with the New Harmony Dress (and with reform dress in general) was that it revealed the existence of a woman’s legs, no longer hiding them under the sizable construction of the crinoline or layered petticoats. Nineteenth-century middle and upper-class women were not supposed to be seen walking, they were expected to “glide” or “sweep” across the floor, an illusion no longer sustained by the reform dress worn by followers of Wright.<sup>184</sup> The fashion worn by Wright not only demonstrated that women had legs but also made visible the mobility of women, something that was often symbolically erased.

Perrot, writing of European fashion and customs, points to a similar public unease with women’s visible mobility. Perrot writes,

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<sup>181</sup> ‘Bloomers’ were loose pants that came together at the ankle, usually worn with a long tunic that revealed the lower half of the leg. They came to be known colloquially as bloomers after Amelia Bloomer, women’s rights activist and avid supporter of the dress reform movement.

<sup>182</sup> Mattingly, 19.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.



Society women hardly ever walked. Walking was made perilous by the fullness of their dress, a highly symbolic physical hindrance. As a corollary, the drama of a tear or a spot was understood as more than an involuntary offense against the aesthetic order: it was shameful evidence of ‘excessive’ movement.<sup>185</sup>

In other words, fashion was a way to keep in check the excessive and inappropriate movement of the nineteenth-century middle and upper class woman. As the writings of Otto, Mayreder, and Ebner-Eschenbach, as well as the texts within *Der Bazar* will demonstrate below, the physically mobile woman was a problematic figure in German and Austrian literature. The following section will first explore the relationship between fashion, femininity, and mobility, before turning to the literary examples found in the fashion magazines and the texts by the women writers of the time.

#### **IV. Corsets, Crinolines, and (Im)Mobility:**

In *Bound to Please*, Summers writes that “corsetry was a very significant body code in the nineteenth century that worked to shore up sex/gender systems which feminism threatened to destabilize.”<sup>186</sup> In other words, at a time when women were beginning to rebel against the unyielding cult of domesticity, fashion – and corseting in particular – gained in favor with traditionalists aiming to maintain more rigid gender codes. Summers points to “gender fluidity” as a source of “cultural anxiety,” illustrating this with the example of “breeching.”<sup>187</sup> Breeching was the practice of marking the transition from boyhood to manhood. Until the mid nineteenth century, young boys wore

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<sup>185</sup> Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 95.

<sup>186</sup> Summers, 67.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

gowns similar to young girls' fashion, until around the age of eight years old. Once a boy became "breeched," his transition into manhood began. Summers writes that breeching lost its popularity circa 1850, making male and female children somewhat more indistinguishable, as boys continued longer into their childhood before becoming "breeched." Soon thereafter, juvenile corseting for young girls gained in favor and acceptance. Summer argues that this overlap in children's clothing reform was not coincidental: "It reveals that female rather than male gender identity was perceived as threateningly fluid and that femininity (unlike masculinity) required the implementation of boundaries to effectively define and contain it."<sup>188</sup> In other words, masculinity was more stable and less in need of outward markers while femininity was more volatile and unpredictable, in need of clear and visibly enforced signs.<sup>189</sup>

Moreover, Summers argues that corseting performed the dual function of providing those visible cues while also offering support and structure to bodies that were perceived as weak, malleable, and complacent. In turn, this image of the fragile woman further perpetuated the notion that girls and women were physically weak, consequently affecting what was considered appropriate behavior and an appropriate level of physical mobility for each gender. Girls, with their slender silhouette, were perceived as too physically weak to participate in the type of active play that was expected of and encouraged for boys. Summers argues for understanding the trend of dressing female

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> While Summer's arguments focus on a British model for dressing nineteenth-century children, similar trends can be seen in the way German children were dressed at the time, making her claims relevant to a German context as well. Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann writes that German children of the middle and upper classes were dressed more alike in the nineteenth century than they had been for a long time prior. Both boys and girls wore white pants with a long tunic ("Kittle") layered on top, giving them an androgynous, child-like appearance. For more, see Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, *Die Kindheit. Kleidung und Wohnen, Arbeit und Spiel. Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1979), 116-117.

children in “impractical garments,” modeled after those worn by adult women, as “a mechanism to ensure the reiteration and perpetuation of a particular female ideology, an ideology that reasserted traditional female role models.”<sup>190</sup> In other words, fashion was used to indoctrinate young girls from an early age to perform a certain type of femininity. A femininity that relied on immobility, fragility, and physical dependence on the so-called stronger sex.

While Summers focuses her analysis on female children and argues that masculinity was perceived as less problematic and therefore enforced to a lesser degree (as with her example of breeching), I argue that this is not entirely the case. At least not in the illustrations found within *Der Bazar*. Depictions of young boys are as closely modeled on the fashions for adult men as is the case with young girls. For example, color lithographs from a March 1881 issue of the magazine show a group of young children gathered at the bottom of an elaborate stone staircase. The children are outdoors and dressed to reflect that. The boy in the image is shown wearing a three-piece suit comprised of breeches, a vest, and a fitted jacket. A neatly folded handkerchief peeks out from his left breast pocket and his left hand lifts his bowler hat in salutation. The boy reads as a miniature version of the bourgeois adult male of the time. Moreover, the tipping of the bowler hat further solidifies the image of perfected masculinity in both gesture and costume. Since women were the keepers of the home and the makers of the next generation of citizens, it follows that the magazine would instruct its readership on

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 68.

how to teach children of both genders how to enact normative gender roles. In this regard, both male and female children receive similar scrutiny from the editorial board.<sup>191</sup>

This modeling of appropriate femininity (and masculinity) can be traced throughout the images in *Der Bazar*, many of which portray women in groups made up of adult women as well as female children. The young girls are dressed in fashions nearly identical to those of the older women surrounding them, with captions describing corsets and high-heeled shoes as everyday children's items. By the end of the century, however, medical professionals rallied against juvenile corsets and cited health reasons as grounds for abandonment of the corseting practice. Little girls in tightly laced corsets were said to have breathing problems<sup>192</sup> and corsets designed to restrict children's mobility<sup>193</sup> fell under particular scrutiny from social reformers and pediatricians. The following section looks at the discourse surrounding corseting (both adult and juvenile) in *Der Bazar*, as well as the magazine's treatment of the crinoline, in an analysis of how middle and upper-class femininity was enforced with the help of fashion and in relation to mobility.

## **V. *Der Bazar*, *Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung* and the Corset and Crinoline**

The corset and the crinoline figured prominently in the texts and visual materials found in the German fashion magazine *Der Bazar*. Issue after issue presented lithographs

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<sup>191</sup> *Der Bazar* offered regular installment on "how to dress your children," articles instructing mothers of the latest fashion, toys, and accessories for both male and female children. While men and young boys make limited appearances within the magazine as a whole, the sections dedicated to children offer tips for both genders with no less focus on male children.

<sup>192</sup> Summers, 76.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 71. Summers points to the "Caplin's Reverso-Tractor Hygienic Corset" in particular as serving to restrict the physical mobility of young girls and to prevent participation in activities that were considered "inappropriate." The Reverso-Tractor was designed specifically to "prevent children standing on one leg," encasing the entire torso down to mid-thigh.

of smiling women, tightly wrapped in the latest fashions and surrounded by beautiful interiors, enjoying the domestic spaces allotted to them. In the majority of these images, the women displayed are shaped to indicate that they are corseted and wearing a crinoline. While the images appear to be depictions of an idyllic existence, the lack of diversity, fluidity, and complexity hints at a latent yet forceful construction of femininity that is demure, fragile, heterosexual, and static.

The majority of images appearing in *Der Bazar* can be attributed to one of these three categories: Indoor Portraits, Outdoor Portraits, and Material Objects. Rarely were there outdoor landscapes without human subjects or depictions of interiors without people occupying the scene. Detailed illustrations of domestic goods were equally abundant, as were depictions of elaborate hairstyles, items of clothing, and accessories. Indoor portraits tended to showcase a fair amount of the domestic décor and surroundings, most prevalent among those being pianos, plush chairs and sofas, bookcases, mirrored vanities, mirrors, fans, potted plants, and elaborate carpets. Noteworthy is that at times the female figures within the domestic spaces appeared to be merging with their surroundings, the lines between subject and object ever so slightly blurred. Such is the case in a 1878 portrait showing two female figures flanked by a large mirror, a bookcase, an oversized ottoman, and a plethora of flowing fabrics. The excess fabrics of the women's skirts spill onto the carpeting, the shawls of their outfits flow into the throw blankets on the furniture, and the viewer is left unsure of where the female subjects end and the domestic décor begins. This mélange of patterns, garments, and domestic property is typical of indoor portraits, showcasing the fashions as much as the home – the nineteenth-century woman's "natural" habitat.

When the female figures are removed from their domestic surroundings and depicted within outdoor spaces, there is a markedly different approach to the visual presentation within those lithographs. The subjects no longer threaten to bleed into the surrounding space but are often set apart through the use of color or through a play with proportions and focus. Despite the change of background from indoor to nature suggesting activity and movement, the clothing and appearance of the female figures indicate otherwise. Their carefully perched hats with ornate embellishments hint at very careful movements as not to disturb their precarious arrangement. The corseted waists complemented by full, crinoline-supported skirts and the small high-heeled shoes barely visible underneath the many layers of fabric present a body that is anything but free to wander. This is a body that is tightly encased and ornamented, intended more for display than interaction. Moreover, the focus in these images is always on the clothing rather than the surroundings. The muted hues of the outdoor backdrop give way to the saturated colors of the garments and the viewer is encouraged to take in the clothing more than the backdrop or activity at hand. Whether indoor or outdoor, the female figures present much the same; elaborate clothing covers their bodies with the emphasis consistently placed on the aesthetics of the garments, rather than the context or situation at hand.

Of those garments featured, the corset and the crinoline were mainstays in the magazine. They feature prominently within the masthead of the publication as well, offering an image of a woman that is presumably representative of the imagined and idealized reader of the magazine. The figure featured for the entire decade of the 1870s is wearing a low-cut dress shaped to highlight her small waist in contrast to the full skirt only partially shown. Her neck is adorned with multiple strands of pearls and her head is

partially covered by a veil.<sup>194</sup> The figure that replaced her in the 1880s boasts a similarly waspish silhouette, as was typical of corseted women, in an equally elaborate dress. The masthead thus already presents the viewer with a glimpse of the imaged femininity on which its readership will be further instructed within the pages of the publication.

*Der Bazar* did not, however, assume that all of its content and the instructions on femininity offered within the magazine would be met with only praise and acceptance. Revealing a look at the discourses surrounding femininity and fashion outside of the fashion world, *Der Bazar* published a supposed reader letter criticizing the crinoline, followed by the editor's rebuke of the reader's arguments. Whether the letter is fictitious or not, the result is the same; the letter exchange allows the magazine to engage with the criticisms lobbied at women's fashion by those aligning themselves with the clothing reform movement. It also allows the magazine to voice its position in a point for point rebuttal of the arguments raised by its opposition. This letter exchange is found in the 1863 issue, titled "Angriff und Vertheidigung der Crinoline" (In opposition to and support of the crinoline),<sup>195</sup> with the opposition to the crinoline voiced by a male reader known by the moniker of "E. L. Bildhauer." The ensuing response is offered by one of the editors of *Der Bazar* named "Veronica v. G." In the letter, E.L. Bildhauer identifies

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<sup>194</sup> Interestingly enough, it is this very item that plays a significant role in Rosa Mayreder's work *Anda Renata*, in which the main female figure – Anda – refuses to let her eyes be covered by a veil as she steps out into the world. Her protest is both literal and symbolic – she refuses the veil that would not only impair her vision but also symbolize her innocence and naiveté. Without it, Anda sees the world as it is and both the good and the bad are revealed to her during her odyssey. Seeing the world for what it is does not make for a happy ending and a fate similar to that of Goethe's Gretchen befalls her. It is therefore all the more noteworthy that the image featured in the masthead of *Der Bazar* for an entire decade depicts a corseted and crinoline-clad woman with a veil over her head, gingerly holding the item symbolic of innocence and ignorance as she examines her reflection in a gilded mirror.

<sup>195</sup> "Angriff und Vertheidigung der Crinoline," *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, June 1863, 171.

himself as a sculptor and artist, which he claims as his authority to comment on such issues as the female form and matters of aesthetics. The tone of the letter is respectful, bordering on apologetic, noting several times that he is writing about a “delicate” matter. He argues for a return to the Grecian and antique way of dress and hairstyle, listing his reasons for finding that style more aesthetically pleasing and better suited to the female body. He calls for a move away from the wasp-waisted silhouette of the time to what he deems a more “natural” and therefore pleasing look of flowing gowns and Grecian draping. He ends his letter with an appeal to the editors of the magazine to support his suggestion and initiate such a fashion change, arguing that if *Der Bazar* modeled such a trend, readers would surely follow.

In response to the sculptor, the magazine offers the voice of Veronica v. G., an editor of *Der Bazar* and self-proclaimed supporter of the crinoline. In her response, Veronica v. G. cites both function and aesthetics as a reason for supporting the use of a crinoline:

Die Crinoline erlaubt lange und weite Kleider, sie unterstützt die Schwere derselben, sie bringt die Schönheit des Stoffes und des Dessins zur Geltung, giebt eine Majestät voll Wohlanstand und verleiht der Taille die schmiegsame Form, welche man mit vollem Rechte bewundert.<sup>196</sup>

In other words, the crinoline not only serves the function of style but also aids the woman practically in supporting the many layers of heavy skirts required by the fashion codes of the day. Additionally, she cites decency and modesty for supporting the use of this garment. While the corset is said to enhance and reveal in many ways, the crinoline hides and conceals much of the body below the waist. Veronica v. G. writes,

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., Translation: “the crinoline allows for long and broad skirts to be worn, it supports the weight thereof, it highlights the beauty of the fabric and the design, it lends the figure a majestic elegance and gives the waist its pliant form, all of this leading to ample admiration.”



Es wäre Ihnen vielleicht gleichgiltig, Ihnen fern stehende Frauen griechisch gekleidet zu sehen, ich bin jedoch überzeugt, es würde Ihnen durchaus nicht angenehm sein, wenn man Ihre Gattin, Schwester oder Tochter in einem solchen Costüm erblickte.<sup>197</sup>

In other words, the shape created by the crinoline gives the female figure the pleasing but entirely artificial look that does not reveal too much of the actual body's contours, thus presenting it as both alluring and demure at the same time.<sup>198</sup> As Summers argues regarding the role of the corset, "corsetry operated at all ages and all stages of women's lives, to create a body that was appropriately modest and virginal, yet sexually alluring."<sup>199</sup> The same argument can be discerned here in the exchange between the two sides; the crinoline is extravagant and showy at the same time that it conceals and makes modest an otherwise provocative part of a woman's body. It is this tension between modesty and sexuality, chastity and seduction that dominates the discourses around the corset and the crinoline within the pages of *Der Bazar*.

Although presented as an object of aesthetic pleasure in many ways (the reader letters, boasting the waist size achieved through tight corseting, point to the pride and vanity associated with the practice), the corset was also hailed as an instrument of propriety, moral fortitude, and order. These claims were particularly abundant in writings about youth corseting. Girls were quite literally to be shaped through the use of a corset that not only molded their physical being but also, by extension, paved the way to their

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., Translation: "Perhaps you would not think much of it were you to see a woman in the distance dressed according to the Greek fashions, but I am certain, that you would not like to see your wife, sister or daughter in such a getup."

<sup>198</sup> Although Veronica v. G. cites decency and modesty as reasons for hiding the body below the waist, it also arguably served the purpose of hiding a woman's legs, and by extension, her mobility, as Perrot and others have noted in terms of nineteenth-century women's fashion.

<sup>199</sup> Summers, 8.

becoming “upright” and moral individuals. Modified youth corsets appeared frequently in *Der Bazar*. One such example can be found in an 1857 issue of *Der Bazar*, in which a modified corset is presented under the title of “Geradehalter für junge Mädchen,”<sup>200</sup> accompanied by an image of it along with the following description:

Das nachtheilige Krummsitzen beim Schreiben, Klavierspielen, Stricken, wird durch die Mahnung der schneidenden Schnurr verhindert, der Rücken wird flach gehalten, die Brust wölbt sich und somit sind die ersten Bedingungen zur Bildung einer guten Gestalt erfüllt.<sup>201</sup>

The article reassures interested mothers that the modified corset will do no harm to their daughters and could, in fact, not be recommended enough:

Die Schnurr ist völlig unschädlich, nicht einmal unbequem, weil sie bei normaler Haltung gar nicht empfunden wird, und kann dies einfache Mittel sorgsam Müttern nicht genug empfohlen werden, weil denn die Erfinderin dieses unschuldigen Apparates denselben mit dem besten Erfolge bei den eigenen Kindern angewendet hat.<sup>202</sup>

By appealing to mothers with the suggestion that a mother herself designed the item, the magazine seeks to circumvent the medical authorities writing in opposition to juvenile corseting. The hierarchy presented is one in which the mother presides over the daughter as the ultimate voice of authority. She is the one to ensure morality and uprightness of both character and physical being through the use of the youth corset. Summers notes that “[physical] ‘support’ remained a principle motif of most children’s corsetry advertisements until the end of the century, despite mounting evidence from clothing

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<sup>200</sup> “Geradehalter für junge Mädchen,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, June 1857, 165. Translation: “Straightening device for young girls.”

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., Translation: “The disadvantageous slouching during writing, piano practice, and sewing, becomes prohibited by the warning cut into the body by the cord. The back is forced into a straight line, the chest is arched, and with such, the first requirements for a good form are met.”

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., Translation: “The cord is not at all damaging, not even uncomfortable, as it is hardly felt when the body is in the correct position. This simple object cannot be recommended enough to worried mothers, as the inventor of the item was able to use it with much success on her own child.”

reform groups, independent feminists and enlightened doctors, who insisted that children's bodies did not require it."<sup>203</sup> Kunzle, on the other hand, in his argument for tight-lacing as a feminist practice (which I will return to shortly), claims that instances of youth corseting, especially when taken to the degree of body modification, can be read as a willful act of asserting agency and control. Moreover, he argues that most youth tight-lacing was done not because of familial or social persuasion but rather in spite of it:

Tight-lacing was largely voluntary, typically taken up at puberty (but not necessarily retained for long) by fourteen- to sixteen-year-olds, sometimes apparently spontaneously, sometimes at the instigation of or in emulation of a friend; sometimes despite, rather than at the insistence of, a parent; and often without a particular male object in view.<sup>204</sup>

This argument, however, reads as a direct contradiction of the materials found in *Der Bazar*. The magazine not only demonstrates how a tightly encased torso and a dainty waist were portrayed as the mainstream ideal of femininity, it also offers examples such as the ones cited above, that show how youth corseting operated in the top-down structure of enforced class and gender norms. Arguing that young girls took to corseting on their own, or in emulation of a friend, discounts the insidious function of the images and texts reiterating a proper and desirable femininity to women of all ages. It discounts the role played by fashion magazines in shaping a collective understanding of gender roles, whether the woman acting in accordance with those ideals understood her actions to be responding to those images or not. Kunzle, thus, appears to be reading the act of tight-lacing devoid of context and without full consideration of the social matrix within which it operated.

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<sup>203</sup> Summers, 66.

<sup>204</sup> Kunzle, "Dress Reform as Antifeminism," 577-78.

As already mentioned, corseting was a ubiquitous practice, expected of women of all ages and classes. The only examples of uncorseted women to be found in *Der Bazar* appear in images and texts demonstrating exoticism and alterity. Images of uncorseted women were offered as examples of the unrefined “Other.” Such is the case with the aforementioned image of the Neapolitan fisherwoman in the January 1881 edition of *Der Bazar*, offering a rare example of nudity in the otherwise “modest” content of the fashion magazine. An article titled “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar” presents a similar world view with the crinoline as the barometer of civilization in place of the corset. In an 1863 issue of *Der Bazar*, a foreign correspondent reports to German readers of the gift sent to the royal family of Madagascar from the king and queen of France. To the author’s amusement, the princess of Madagascar foolishly believes the crinoline to belong on the outside of one’s dress, making it the latest fashion in Africa to wear the steel cage like an exoskeletal device on top of one’s garments. The article goes on to ridicule the ignorance of the African princess in appreciating the purpose of the crinoline. The message once more is that the non-German and non-Western “Other” needs to be educated and made civilized through the export of culture, or rather, fashion.<sup>205</sup>

As demonstrated with these examples, the writings surrounding the corset and the crinoline in *Der Bazar* focused on aesthetics, propriety, and the construction of an ideal “German” woman. The corset and the crinoline fashioned German daughters and mothers in accordance with national ideals regarding femininity, culture, and morality. That education was to start early, molding young girls into the women their society desired. The use of corseting, with all of its focus on constricting the body, shaping it to fit an

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<sup>205</sup> For a more in-depth analysis of this topic, see chapter two of this dissertation, specifically the section titled “The German vs. The Other.”

ideal, and overcoming discomfort for the sake of appearances, provides an insight into the attributes deemed appropriate to the German woman. The crinoline, with its exaggerated camouflage of women's bodies below the waist (their reproductive and sexual organs), suggests the unease with which women's sexuality and physicality figured in the collective consciousness. The proper German woman was at once sexually attractive and alluring (with her tightly corseted bust brought to prominence), while retaining a close link to morality and chastity (symbolized by the erasure of her contours below the waist).

In contrast, women writers touching on the subject of fashion, and the corset in particular, were less interested in the visual appeal of these garments as enforced in the popular press, and were more concerned with its restrictive nature and its effect on a woman's mobility and independence. Focusing not on propriety, custom, or aesthetics, the women writers analyzed here "wrote back" using physical mobility and access to varying geographical spaces as the framework for their arguments against the popular fashions of the time.

## **VI. Women Writers on the Corset and Crinoline**

Of the three writers of this study – Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Otto – the last most directly addressed matters of fashion and the impact thereof on women's social lives. In her essay on "Moden" (fashion), Otto writes,

Die Moden sind immer ein Spiegel nicht nur des Zeitgeschmackes, sondern auch der Zeit selbst und der in ihr herrschenden Interessen, es knüpfen sich nicht nur

persönliche, es knüpfen sich zeitgeschichtliche Erinnerungen an sie und diese bieten zugleich ein cultur-historisches Material.<sup>206</sup>

In other words, Otto recognized fashion as more than a mere frivolous interest and analyzed it as an indicator of how gender and class structures were understood by her time period and how these were represented within a quotidian space. She takes a critical tone as she describes how women's fashions inhibited women's ability to live autonomously or independently of others, noting that clothing such as the corset, that required additional helpers to be put on, made it impossible for a woman to live alone unless she forwent all activity outside of the home. Otto also recognized fashion as an international phenomenon that was part of a social matrix much larger than just a German or national one: "Die Mode ist eine internationale Macht und wird sich als solche nicht aus der Welt schaffen lassen."<sup>207</sup> She understood that fashion and gender roles were part of a political game that was played on a much larger stage than just her immediate surroundings and thus was difficult to ignore or change.

In her essay on fashion, Otto also focuses on the literal and physical effects of fashion rather than reading it as a system of codes and symbols. She does not offer readings of the corset as enforcer of an idealized femininity (although this type of reading may be implied) but rather writes about the physical and tangible effects of wearing a corset on the body, making a direct connection between women's quest for emancipation and the corset:

Diese langen und hohen Taillen hatten nur den einen Uebelstand, daß sie im Rücken entweder mit Schnüren durch gegen dreißig Schnürlöcher zugeschnürt

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<sup>206</sup> Otto, "Moden," 4. Translation: "Fashion not only mirrors the tastes of a time, but also the time period itself and its dominating ideas. It not only showcases personal memories attached to the fashions but also the collective memories that help build a socio-historical image as a whole."

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 58. Translation: "Fashion is an international force and as such, it refuses to be removed."

oder mit einem Dutzend paar kleiner Hefte und Schlingen zugeheftet werden mußten. Da war es denn absolut unmöglich, daß eine Dame allein mit ihrem Anzug fertig werden konnte, namentlich im ersten Falle – im besten vermochten geschickte Hände und Arme sich wenigstens einigermaßen selbst zu helfen. Es war allerdings *das wichtigste Argument gegen die Frauenemanzipation*: Eine Frau, die ohne fremde Hilfe nicht einmal vermochte, sich so anzuziehen, dass sie sich sehen lassen konnte – wie konnte die selbstständig sein wollen!<sup>208</sup>

Otto saw the consequence of such elaborate and demanding fashions as a loss of autonomy for women. She goes so far as to label it one of the main obstacles for women's liberation ("das wichtigste Argument gegen die Frauenemanzipation"): women's inability to perform as basic a task as getting dressed without outside help. Consequently, when corsets with front closures became available in the late nineteenth century, Otto hailed them as an important condition of women's liberation:

Im Rücken behielt man noch den Schein bei, als sei die Taille da zugeschnürt oder geheftet, aber man kam nun doch wirklich in die glückliche Lage, sich selbst ohne fremde Hilfe an- und ausziehen zu können. Es war dies wirklich der wichtigste Schritt zur Emanzipation!<sup>209</sup>

Ultimately, Otto tried to pave the way for women's liberation with a pragmatic and straight-forward treatise on the fashions of her time, forging connections between the state of social and gender roles and the everyday things that shape and affect women's lives. In no uncertain terms, she offers the restrictions imposed on women's mobility as her main argument against fashions such as the corset, drawing direct connections

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 74, emphasis mine. Translation: "These high waists had only the one disadvantage; that they needed to be either laced up the back through thirty-some button holes or that they had to be locked in place with the aid of a dozen or more little hooks and eyes. This made it entirely impossible for a woman to dress herself – in the best of cases, she could barely help herself. This, by the way, *was the best argument against women's emancipation*: a woman who could not even, without the help of others, do as little as dress herself in a manner deemed presentable, how could she claim to be independent!"

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 77. Translation: "The back retained the appearance as though the waist were laced or hooked, although one finally came to the fortunate situation of being able to dress without the help of others. This was truly the most important step towards emancipation."

between a woman's uninhibited access to movement to her ability to assert her independence and enact her free will.

Rosa Mayreder, on the other hand, devoted significantly less of her writings on women's rights to the corset in particular despite opting for reform dress in her personal life and refusing to corset from the young age of nineteen. Fashion and clothing in general do play a significant role in her fiction as she often describes in great detail how characters are dressed and that information is presented as the key to understanding a character's social place and personality. In this way, clothing plays a similar role in her fiction as it was shown to do in *Der Bazar*; it functions as symbolic of character and social belonging. The properly laced girl in *Der Bazar* is the morally upright girl. The crinoline wearing woman is the modest, respectable woman. Similarly, Mayreder guides the reader to understand the figures in her fiction through the clues provided by their outward appearance.

For instance, in Mayreder's *Sonderlinge*, Wendelin Traugott is a petit bourgeois who embodies all of the stereotypes of his class and gender: he is obsessed with appearances, order, social mobility, and wealth. His clothing reflects his fastidious preoccupation with the bourgeois moral and aesthetic code:

Nicht gerade nach der letzten Mode, aber sehr sorgfältig angezogen, Hut, Rock und Schuhe peinlich blank gebürstet, tadellos behandschuht, einen Spazierstock mit elfenbeinernem Knopf in den Händen, so tauchte er regelmäßig um die selbe Zeit auf und ging mit hygienischer Gründlichkeit zwei Stunden spazieren.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Sonderlinge* (Berlin: Hermann Hillger, 1921), 171. Translation: "Not entirely according to the latest fashion, but very carefully dressed nonetheless, with hat, coat, and shoes painstakingly brushed to perfection, immaculately gloved, holding a walking stick with ivory handle in his hands, is how he appeared routinely at the same time each day, walking with the conviction of a health fiend for the entirety of two hours."



Traugott is further described as looking like the typical “Staatsbeamter”<sup>211</sup> (civil servant), his appearance and demeanor both signaling his acquiescence and conformity to all that his class and rank deem appropriate. He is not so much fashionable as he is orderly, precise, and painstakingly meticulous. His appearance signals to the reader that his character flaw is one of exaggerated exactness; he has taken what could have been read as positive qualities to a comical extreme. Not surprisingly, Traugott becomes a figure of ridicule, unsuccessful in his courtship of the beautiful Merene.

*Sonderlinge* is unique in that it depicts a male figure obsessed with cleanliness, appearances, and clothing. Although an awareness of how to navigate the social expectations surrounding personal and public decorum belonged to the nineteenth-century bourgeois code of conduct, Traugott’s exaggerated preoccupation with these matters make him an oddity. His social ineptness is further signaled by his inability to make an impression with Merene and his close association to her father, who is a tyrant and a social recluse. Thus, the only figure sympathetic to Traugott’s way of being is one that is also explicitly labeled as a social misfit and an antagonist. As noted, Mayreder’s story is unique in that it focuses on a man obsessed with the things that would have been traditionally part of a normative femininity; the conspicuous preoccupation with clothing, appearances, and decorum. In other words, the very things that fill the pages of *Der Bazar* are the things that make Traugott a farcical figure. Mayreder’s text thus reinforces the idea of gendered spaces as represented by *Der Bazar*.<sup>212</sup> Additionally, Mayreder

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid. 1.

<sup>212</sup> As noted with the examples of boys’ fashion, magazines such as *Der Bazar* instructed the wife and mother reader on how to dress her sons to fit in with the gender expectations of his time. Similarly, regular features on men’s fashions (ties, suits, hats), indicated that the aesthetic realm was one assigned to the women in the family. A wife’s role was to oversee her husband’s and sons’ outward appearance, ensuring that it adhered to the social codes established. This unyielding divide of spheres – women as part of the

demonstrates what happens when a male figure wanders into the realm of the domestic and has taken on traditionally female traits, much to the detriment of his social and personal well being.

In Mayreder's story *Idole*, the fashion-obsessed and appearances-driven Nelly is the more socially successful character, enforcing the idea that those traits conform to the expectations placed on proper femininity. The main character Gisa, on the other hand, reads as non-conformist and as a social recluse, preferring to focus on books and ideas rather than on clothing and trends. As with Traugott, Gisa's inability to fit in with the society around her is signaled by her unsuccessful interaction with her love interest. In a social context, in which marriage is symbolic of successfully achieved adulthood, the inability to secure a mate reads as pitiful and reproachable. Gisa, not for a lack of trying, is unable to win the heart of her love interest, Dr. Lamaris. In a near farcical twist of the plot, Dr. Lamaris ends up marrying a woman who is like Gisa in every way but one; his new wife looks just like Gisa, acts like Gisa, but is without any of the ostracizing characteristics of a woman interested in intellectual pursuits over domestic ones. This new wife replaces Gisa in the most effective way – she renders obsolete the only character trait that displeased Dr. Lamaris in his admirer: her “overactive mind.” In a conversation emblematic of many others, Dr. Lamaris cautions Gisa: “Sie sollten mehr in der Realität leben als in Büchern. Die Phantasie ist ein gefährliches Element!”<sup>213</sup>

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aesthetic, men as part of the intellect – figures prominently into the writings of Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Otto as well as into the texts and to be found in *Der Bazar*. I will address this intellect/beauty divide as it pertained to women's education in chapter five of this dissertation.

<sup>213</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Idole* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1899), 63.

When read against the tale of Wendelin Traugott, Mayreder's story *Idole* illustrates how intellect and book learning were of little advantage to the bourgeois woman of her time, whereas a preoccupation with fashion served a woman well while marking a man as an undesirable misfit. Mayreder thus writes back to the fashion magazines of her time in a way that replicates the images of idealized femininity and masculinity but not without a critical eye. Her works not only present figures that adhere to nineteenth-century gender norms but also those who do not, or, choose not to. Using the examples of misfits such as Gisa and Traugott, Mayreder explores what happens when a person oversteps social boundaries and conducts him or herself in a way that is not in line with gender and class expectations.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's fiction offers a similar take on gender roles and the divide between beauty and intellect. In her work, *Komtesse Muschi*, Ebner-Eschenbach illustrates not only how fashion functions as a marker of class and character, but also how the rejection of conventional dress by a woman threatens to destabilize the social order of the late nineteenth century. The young countess Muschi does not adhere to dress codes appropriate to her gender and class, preferring to don outfits more suitable to a "jockey" than a "lady."<sup>214</sup> She is masculine coded not only in appearance but in character as well, described as boisterous, loud, adventurous, and rebellious. The countess refuses to embroider or play the piano, preferring to spend her time galloping and hunting. "Sport" is a term that comes up again and again in the story, especially when the text describes Muschi, who is a self-proclaimed "Sportskomtesse."<sup>215</sup> In the evenings,

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<sup>214</sup> Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, *Komtesse Muschi* (Munich: Aremis Verlag, 1984), 36.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 46.

her father sits with the family reading the sports pages, an activity that further establishes the link between sports and men, and by extension, Muschi (the ‘Sportskomtesse’) and masculinity. Moreover, when referring to herself, Muschi uses the term “Kerl” and her love interest, the count, says unthinkingly, “Sagen Sie mir, lieber Freund” before he quickly corrects himself with “verzeihen Sie! Ich wollte sagen: verehrte Gräfin.”<sup>216</sup>

Ebner-Eschenbach provides the reader with plenty of such clues to link countess Muschi to masculinity and to gender deviance. What makes the countess such an anomaly is foremost her choice of dress (clothing that permits her to ride horses and be active outdoors) as well as her choice of activities. Ebner-Eschenbach makes a direct connection between the countess’s chosen pastimes and her appearance and the clothes she wears. Like Mayreder’s, Ebner-Eschenbach’s narrative also points to a correlation between clothing and character, indicating that the nineteenth-century reader implicitly understood such a correlation.

Komtesse Muschi’s deviation from traditional gender norms does not bode well. As with the other stories presented above, her failure to conform to society’s expectations is made plain by her inability to make the marriage match of her choice. The count, to whom she is to be wed, appreciates her as a friend but cannot see past her masculine-coded traits to perceive her as a potential love object. Her affections are unrequited and she has to witness the match of the count with her social rival, the feminine and conventional Clara Aarheim. In the end, Muschi concedes that it does not always pay to reject conventions: “es ist nicht immer so angenehm, als man glaubt, eine Sportskomteß

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 28.

zu sein.”<sup>217</sup> Although Ebner-Eschenbach’s story reads as a cautionary tale to readers tempted to reject traditions and social norms – the athletic and independently minded Muschi ends up alone and disappointed in love – it also scorns the image of normative womanhood presented by the fashion magazines and in the canonical literature of her time:

Nesti, eine ungeheure Langweile hat mich angegähnt – ich hab uns schon sitzen gesehn wie das junge Ehepaar auf den Vignetten der illustrierten Zeitungen. Er – vorlesend, natürlich aus dem Schiller, ich, ‘sinnig lauschend’, schmiege mich an seine Schulter, und das Bébé auf dem Arm eines ‘Mädchen für alles’, das blättert schon in einem Family-Goethe . . . Wenn er sich unsere Häuslichkeit vielleicht so vorstellt, habe ich mir gedacht, das will ich ihm gleich austreiben, und er sehr empessiert fragt: ‘Sie kennen Goethe und Schiller?’ antworte ich resolut: ‚Peuh! Mit dem Klassischen lassen Sie mich aus, ich habe immer gehört, dass der Goethe unmoralisch ist, und der Schiller, der ist mir doch gar zu geschwollen.’<sup>218</sup>

The above passage illustrates the countess’s flippant tone when considering what a normative existence would look like for someone of her sex and status. In a letter to her friend Nesti, she describes her apprehensions when talking to the count about literature, and by extension, the visions of femininity provided by the popular press and the classics. The role of the aristocratic woman, as demonstrated by popular women’s magazines (and by male writers such as Goethe and Schiller), leaves little room for women to assert themselves or to be active participants in a conversation. They are to be confined to sitting while “sinnig lauschend” (listening sensitively), devoid of a voice or an active role outside of the one assigned to them as wives, daughters, or mothers.

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 46. Translation: “It is not always as pleasant as one may think to be a ‘sports countess.’”

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 28-29. Translation: “Nesti, an overwhelming sense of boredom overtook me. I could just picture us sitting there, like the young married couple in the vignettes of the illustrated press. Him, reading out loud from Schiller of course, and me ‘listening sensitively,’ nestling into his shoulder, with the baby in the arms of the nanny, leafing through a Family-Goethe... If this is how he envisioned our family life, then I wanted to rid him of any such notions. To which he asked impressed, “you know Schiller and Goethe?” I then answered: “Peuh! With those classics you can just leave me be! I’ve always heard that Goethe is immoral and that Schiller, he’s too pompous for my taste.”

Thus, Ebner-Eschenbach both cautions the independent-minded reader about the hardships she might face when breaking with traditional and normative femininity (“es ist nicht immer so angenehm, als man glaubt, eine Sportskomteß zu sein”), while also writing back to the images presented by the popular press that were enforcing the staid and passive way in which women are instructed to perform their gender. *Komtesse Muschi* leaves the reader wondering how one might best navigate the social system of that time, as neither those adhering to traditional gender roles nor those rejecting them appear to be in an envious position. The choices offered are limited to a dichotomy of eccentric misfit (the “Sportskomtess”) or passive underling (the “sinnig lauschend” young wife of the periodicals). Ebner-Eschenbach offers no narrative space for a woman falling between those polar opposites, suggesting society’s lack of space for a more nuanced figure. Moreover, Ebner-Eschenbach not only writes back to the popular press of her time, she also points to the male-dominated canon (Schiller, Goethe) as being equally implicated in enforcing an ideology of femininity that reduces women to the role of subordinate and dependent.

## **VII. The Corset, the Crinoline, and the (Non)Maternal**

In the writings surrounding fashion, and the corset in particular, domesticity loomed large. The images of the properly laced woman in *Der Bazar* were often images of idealized domesticity, and, by extension, romanticized motherhood. Perfectly coiffed and corseted women are depicted surrounded by children, in groupings that leave little room for an understanding of femininity devoid of motherhood. Similarly, in the texts by the women writers analyzed above, it is the properly dressed Nellys and Claras that are

poised for the path of marriage and maternity. The bookish, athletic, and intellect-driven Gisas and Muschis are the ones left unwed and heading towards spinsterhood (ostensibly a nineteenth-century woman's worst fate). For all the close associations between conformity in fashion and femininity and a life of domesticity and motherhood, there is no mention in either *Der Bazar* or within the works by the women writers of one key criticism of the corset or the tight-lacing woman, namely, of corseting as a way to induce abortion.

Nineteenth-century medical opinions, popular writings, and fashion advertisements competed as voices of authority on what the corset meant in terms of its function and in regard to the consequences thereof. As demonstrated above, fashion magazines like *Der Bazar* presented items such as the corset and the crinoline as markers of civilization and propriety. "Uncultured" nations such as the African people of Madagascar were presented as foils to the educated and cultivated Germans, for which fashion accouterments such as the corset and the crinoline served as symbols of social progress and refinement. *Der Bazar* was not alone in its treatment of fashion as a marker of progress and enlightenment; across Europe and North America fashion magazines were operating in the same mode. The French *La Mode Illustrée* and the American *Harper's Bazaar* engaged in similar discourses regarding the corset and the crinoline,<sup>219</sup> aligning themselves with their German sister-magazine in promoting corsets and crinolines as symbols of class and culture. The women writers of this study, by contrast, either denounced the corset explicitly (Otto) or hinted at the powerful and damaging

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<sup>219</sup> For more on the overlap in content and editorial connection between these three magazines, see chapter one of this dissertation.

ways that fashion in general was used to impose and limit gender roles (Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach).

Neither party addresses corseting as used to induce miscarriage or to hide the maternal body. Despite its glaring omission from any of the writings within *Der Bazar* or in the works of the three above-mentioned writers, this practice did figure into the collective discussions surrounding the corset and tight-lacing during the nineteenth century and is still frequently mentioned by scholars analyzing this garment today. The abortive “mother monster” gave rise to a host of texts presenting the topic from sides both sympathetic and condemnatory.<sup>220</sup> *Der Bazar*, however, remained silent on the issue, presenting image after image of the corseted mother, surrounded by her perfect children and her beautifully decorated domestic space. The women writers of this study, too, forewent the topic of corseting and abortion, despite willingly engaging with other difficult subject matters such as prostitution, poverty, death, and abuse. The glaring omission of a matter so crucial to the discussion of the nineteenth-century female body, agency, and gender politics thus bears noticing. A brief look at how the topic of corseting and abortion was presented in the literature of the time provides insight as to why

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<sup>220</sup> One of the most chilling and evocative descriptions of a “mother monster” in the European literature of the time is found in Guy de Maupassant’s short story, “A Mother of Monsters.” The story presents a mother, also referred to as “the Devil,” who knowingly corsets her pregnant body in order to produce deformed and misshapen offspring that she then sells to traveling merchants for their collection of “freaks.” The woman is described as a brute and an animal, maiming her unborn children in exchange for monetary compensation. Although the story reads, at a first glance, as a critique of corseting and the ways that the trend can be abused, a closer reading suggests that Maupassant was more focused on the social matrix that led to these extreme practices rather than the individuals that fall victim thereto. Her transgression is both prompted and made feasible by the strict and unyielding social and gender codes of her time. There is no room for a woman pregnant with an illegitimate child, especially one that belongs to the peasantry. Not only does social stigma pave the way for the mother’s acts, but it also ensures its perpetration with each subsequent pregnancy; selling her malformed children becomes financially rewarded, whereas keeping her healthy (but illegitimate) children would lead to social and financial ruin.



magazines such as *Der Bazar*, as well as the women writers of this study, would choose to omit it from its pages.

It remains unknown how often and how willfully miscarriages were induced with the help of the corset, but despite a lack of statistics, the topic loomed large in the anti-corseting discourse of the nineteenth-century. David Kunzle, author of *Fashion and Fetishism*, argues that most nineteenth-century women who corseted, and especially women engaging in the more questionable practice of tight-lacing, did not voluntarily submit themselves to the scrutiny of the medical world. It is thus difficult to assess how many miscarriages resulted from corseting and whether stories thereof did not exist as mere fodder for sensationalist reporting.<sup>221</sup> However common or not, the idea of a woman taking reproductive control into her own hands, despite the government's and the church's stake in family planning, sparked great controversy and no shortage of baleful writings against corseting and its consequences. The discourse surrounding corseting and abortion generally focused on the female body as the maternal body, making it subject to outside jurisdiction, desexualizing, and deeming it the property of men. This line of argument prompts Kunzle to argue for corseting as a feminist practice.

Kunzle offers his reading of corseting and tight-lacing as a feminist act in his response to the Helene Robert's article "The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman."<sup>222</sup> According to Kunzle, the very fact that tight-lacing and corseting during the nineteenth-century were tarnished with accusations of aiding abortions and with molding the female body into something artificial and non-maternal

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<sup>221</sup> Kunzle, *Fashion and Fetishism*, 164-168.

<sup>222</sup> See Helene Roberts, "Reply to David Kunzle's 'Dress Reform as Antifeminism: A Response to Helene E. Roberts's 'The Exquisite Slave.''" *Signs*. Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1977), pp. 518-519.

makes this practice a consciously feminist undertaking. Kunzle writes, “the enemies of the corset, from Rousseau and Napoleon to Renoir, are generally autocratic males with a low opinions of the female sex and an attachment to the concept of the “natural woman,” that is, one dedicated to home and children.”<sup>223</sup> Additionally, he cites Rousseau as having instilled the idea that “the corset is an abuse of nature, especially maternal nature” into the collective imagination of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.<sup>224</sup> Kunzle, in turn, praises the corset for offering women a way to fashion themselves as non-domestic and non-maternal. As the tight-laced body is anything but dowdy or compromised by pregnancy, the image it conveys is one of control, allure, and self-governance. He writes, “public manifestations of tight-lacing was a conscious act of defiance against established medical and moral authority.”<sup>225</sup> Kunzle goes on to claim, “very few serious feminists spent much time denouncing the corset. The majority felt that the whole campaign was at best irrelevant, at worst counterproductive. No important social critics paid any attention to the controversy. Denunciation of the corset was the obsession of *small minds*.”<sup>226</sup>

Kunzle writes that it was mostly women of the lower class, who were accused of willfully inducing miscarriage through tight-lacing or corseting, making it a matter of class and gender warfare. In addition, prostitutes were rumored to practice this type of

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<sup>223</sup> Kunzle, “Dress Reform as Antifeminism,” 570.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 574.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 575. Emphasis mine. Joanna Russ responds to Kunzle’s claim regarding corseting being the obsession of “small minds” in her essay, “Comment on Helene E. Roberts’s “The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman” and David Kunzle’s “Dress Reform as Antifeminism” in *Signs*. Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1977), pp. 520-521. She counters with the question, “Did Louisa May Alcott and Amelia Bloomer have small minds?” I offer Otto as yet another example of a writer with hardly a “small mind,” who also addresses the topic of corseting as it pertains to women’s emancipation as noted in this chapter.

“deliberate feticide,”<sup>227</sup> which, according to Kunzle, led to corseting being dubbed a “Hurenmode” (whore fashion) in parts of the German-speaking world.<sup>228</sup> Kunzle takes the position that corseting and tight-lacing have been wrongfully maligned, class and gender anxiety being to blame. According to Kunzle, anti-corseting advocates projected their disdain for the lower classes or sexually empowered women onto the instruments that they saw as symbolic of these groups. Kunzle argues that tight-lacing and corseting can be seen as acts of empowerment and sexual liberation. He deems tight-lacing in particular as “part of the history of the struggle of self-expression, male and female,” further arguing that “the crusade against tight-lacing and other erotic forms of dress is part of the crusade against sexuality, which is as old as Christianity.”<sup>229</sup>

While corseting drew attention to the secondary sexual characteristics of a woman, tight-lacing went beyond the voyeuristic aspect of the practice to an actual and very tangible aspect of sexuality: pleasure derived from pain. Kunzle explains how tight-lacing taken to the extreme functions much like drug usage; it leads to hallucinatory and out-of-body experiences due to lack of oxygen and numbness to the body, effectively playing with the pain and pleasure threshold of the individual.<sup>230</sup> He adds that “‘suicide’ by tight-lacing was a favorite topos of the Victorian press at a time when the idea of women aspiring to extreme physical sensations and mystical experiences was inadmissible.”<sup>231</sup> In other words, tight-lacing was demonized because it was too closely

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<sup>227</sup> Kunzle, *Fashion and Fetishism*, 165.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 40.

linked to the sexual pleasure and sexual empowerment of the wearer. This was made all the more problematic by the fact that the wearers were women who were not supposed to have sexual desires, much less sexual agency.

Arguing for a reading of the corset and of tight-lacing that sees the practice as empowering and sexually liberating, Kunzle writes,

Women who publicly proclaimed, in word and deed, that they tight-laced to please men were not affirming their subservience to the male as much as asserting their right to appeal to his – and their own – libido. In doing so, they drew upon themselves accusations of infantilism, barbarism, sexual depravity, masturbation, drug addiction, atheism, and most frequently of all, contempt for the sacred duties of the mother.<sup>232</sup>

Kunzle thus asserts that it is the corset's function as liberator and validator of women's sexuality that made it a target for derision. The problem with the corset is not how it affects women's health or that it symbolizes their submission to a patriarchal ideal of womanhood but rather that it enables and promotes the unabashed claim of personal freedom and agency when it comes to sexuality and body manipulation.

Kunzle does present an interesting reading of the corset that offers a different lens through which to view this garment. Were one to look at corseting through a Kunzlean lens when analyzing *Der Bazar*, one could argue that the women represented within were not of the static and submissive type as my reading of the lithographs in the above section argues. Instead, one could read the images of the tightly corseted and elegantly dressed female figures within the publication as examples of self-aware and sexually empowered individuals. This reading does not, however, allow for the fact that most of those corseted women were surrounded by accouterments of domesticity or by groups of children. Nor does it account for feminist writers such as Otto, who outright criticized the corset for

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 43.

impeding movement, for making women reliant on outside help in getting dressed, and for rendering the female body subject to restrictions that serve little purpose other than an aesthetic one. Kunzle's reading of the sexually liberated corseted woman or exhibitionist tight-lacer does offer a valid alternative in understanding the practice of corseting and tight-lacing outside of the oversimplified paradigm that posits women as mere automatons with no agency or voice of their own. It does not, however, account for the stark realities of corseting, as represented by those he dismisses as having "small minds." In fact, it overlooks entirely the acts and writings by writers and women's rights advocates such as Otto, who criticizes the corset in her essay "Moden," or Mayreder, who refused to wear the corset once she turned nineteen.

Kunzle also writes erroneously, "There is no instance of a fashion magazine condoning, or a single leader of fashion (aristocrat, serious actress) practicing, tight-lacing; no upper-class woman is known to have descended to what a reformer calls "the very badge of vulgarity."<sup>233</sup> Kunzle makes this claim because he separates tight-lacing from regular corseting, arguing that the more extreme version (the feminist undertaking of tight-lacing) was a recognized act of defiance and thus omitted from mainstream publications or shunned by women in the public eye. I maintain, however, that if we are to use Kunzle's own definition of tight-lacing ("The most useful definition of tight-lacing is not numerical but rather the point at which a waist attracted attention and was known by its perpetuator to do so,"<sup>234</sup> then his claim of it not being present in the popular press of the time is simply not true. Neither is his claim that it withstood participation from members of the nobility; Empress Elizabeth of Austria serves as only one perfect

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<sup>233</sup> Kunzle, "Dress Reform as Antifeminism," 573.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 574.

example contrary to his argument. Kunzle limits tight-lacing to fringe groups and to the lower classes in order to argue that it was a marginalized practice, making it particularly appealing to feminists, which, in turn, made tight-lacing a feminist act because of its non-mainstream belonging.

Kunzle, however, is unwilling to recognize that the separation between corseting and tight-lacing is much more nuanced and not as definitive as he suggests. If tight-lacing has no numerical definition but is simply the act of ostentatiously drawing attention to one's small waist, then the images in *Der Bazar* are not far removed from displaying instances thereof. Kunzle moreover argues that tight-lacing was a feminist practice because it defied so vehemently the image of the maternal and the "natural" woman and because it allowed woman to assert her sexuality and her claim to illicit physical pleasure. By extension, tight-lacing to induce abortion can be read as a feminist act as it rejects motherhood in a fatal and deliberate way. The women writers of this study, who argued for women's rights and for an understanding of femininity outside of the maternal and the domestic, do not, however, argue for the corset as feminist in its ability to enhance a woman's sexuality while freeing her of maternal responsibilities. This line of reasoning does not appear in any of the texts by Otto, Mayreder, and Ebner-Eschenbach, who point to corseting and mainstream fashion as the tools used to enforce a normative femininity, rather than offer a way out. Nor does the corset as non-maternal figure into the texts and images of *Der Bazar*.

One plausible explanation for this is that the topic of abortion would have likely alienated the average nineteenth-century reader and, as the examples taken from the texts of Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach demonstrate, theirs was a more subtle

approach in arguing for women's rights. Not one of the women writers of this study used shock value as a way to gain favor or attention. Even if tight-lacing was used as a way to induce miscarriage, Otto does not address that phenomenon in her treatment of the corset in "Moden" nor does she discuss the corset in its relation to sexuality. Rather, all three writers discuss the fashions of their time with a focus on women's access to non-domestic spaces and to physical and geographical mobility. *Der Bazar*, on the other hand, comes down on the issue of corseting as imperative for the cultured German wife and mother. Not only does the magazine shy away from any association of corseting and miscarriage, it offers medical opinions praising corseting for young and old. Advertisements in the back of each issue provide information on corsetieres and sizing charts. As both *Der Bazar* and the women writers aimed to reach a broad audience and to influence and persuade readers with their texts, it reasons that volatile and controversial topics such as corseting and abortion were left untreated in favor of safer subject matters.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

David Kunzle argues for a reading of the corset that only understands it as a tool of autonomy, power, and emboldened sexuality. He claims that contemporaries of the corset understood it as such as well, arguing that members of the reform movement advocated against the corset due to its feminist function. We have, however, evidence to the contrary. Otto's text on fashion offers us at the very least one prominent voice of the nineteenth-century German women's movement that disagreed with Kunzle's assessment of corseting and tight-lacing. While Mayreder and Ebner-Eschenbach address the specifics of corseting less overtly, they too point to the ways in which fashion operated to

enforce a normative femininity. *Der Bazar*, on the other hand, provided an enthusiastic account of how the corset and the crinoline functioned to symbolize (and enforce) civility and social refinement.

While it is indeed simplistic to read the corset and the crinoline as mere symbols of an oppressive patriarchy, hailing the corset as a tool of sexual liberation is equally reductive of the bigger picture: the corset impaired a woman's physical mobility and limited her effectiveness in terms of the spaces she occupied and the type of activities permitted to her. While magazines such as *Der Bazar* offered the corset and the crinoline as tokens of civility and sophistication (with images of the non-corseted Other serving as a foil), women writers such as Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach wrote back with a more nuanced take on how fashion intersected with class and gender dynamics. The following chapter will consider how geographical mobility figured into the discussion surrounding normative femininity, with the shoe and horseback riding as the focus of my analysis.



## Chapter Four: On Traversing Space, the Shoe, and the Horse

### I. On traversing space and the nineteenth-century woman

Mentions of footwear or the riding habit in literature are easy to overlook, as they sound like insignificant details, inconsequential to the larger concerns of the text. This minutia of the everyday, however, most accurately paints a picture of how the “bigger things” were understood. By looking at how these accouterments of the quotidian were written about, we gain a better understanding of what constituted the norm, the expected, and the exceptional in nineteenth-century Europe. This chapter traces the discourses surrounding the shoe and the horse in the nineteenth-century magazine *Der Bazar*, *Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, and in the works of Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Louise Otto. I will first present a brief history of the shoe in the nineteenth century as well as the role of riding attire and horseback riding in relation to gender roles of that time, then analyze how these topics were presented within the pages of *Der Bazar*, and finally, look at how the women writers of this study wrote back in a voice of their own regarding these ways of traversing space. This chapter focuses on pedestrian and equestrian traffic as sites of nineteenth-century mobility and does not include modern modes of transportation (such as bicycle riding and train travel) because the former figured into the writings and images presented in *Der Bazar* and in the texts by the three women writers of my study, whereas the latter did not figure into the discourse present in these works as regularly and as dominantly. As a result, my analysis of women’s geographical mobility will concentrate on the ways of traversing space that most frequently made of an appearance in the works by Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, Otto, and in the women’s fashion magazine *Der Bazar*.

## II. The Shoe and the Nineteenth-Century Woman

The shoe's relationship to women during the nineteenth century is as fraught as that of the corset and the crinoline. Early nineteenth-century footwear returned from the heeled boots of the seventeenth-century to a flat sole and a more utilitarian structure and design. By mid-century, however, the high heel had returned and shoe designs for women veered entirely into the aesthetic rather than the useful. In manufacturing, an increasing number of sewing machines that could work on leather came into existence by the 1860s, but because of the intricate nature of shoe design and embellishment at the time, fashionable footwear continued to be largely made by hand.<sup>235</sup> According to fashion historian Louise Mitchell, the most popular style of women's shoe in the mid to late nineteenth century was the "pump," a slip-on shoe that had a high arch and was typically intricate in design and embellishment.<sup>236</sup> This type of shoe was mostly worn by women of the middle to upper classes, consisted of delicate fabrics such as silks and satins, and was embellished with elaborate accessories and add-ons, such as bows, buckles, and beading. This type of footwear was not constructed for its utilitarian purpose as much as for the symbolic nature of its intricacy: these were shoes for women of leisure.

The materials and embellishments of the shoe were not alone in rendering it more ornamental than practical; the shape and design of the high heel only added to its dubious construction. By the mid nineteenth century, as the heel height grew and the arch rose, the toe box also became increasingly pointed and narrow. As a result, the foot came to be

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<sup>235</sup> See Louise Mitchell, "Fashionable footwear: the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries," in *Stepping Out, Three Centuries of Shoes*, ed. Mitchell, Louise and Lindie Ward (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 2008), 29-51 for more on the history of the shoe and the manufacturing practices of the nineteenth century.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 46.

squeezed into a completely unnatural shape and position, making walking more difficult and standing unbearable for prolonged periods of time. Because a large foot connoted slovenliness and vulgarity, a “proper” woman wore a shoe that not only hid the natural curves of the foot but also gave it the more narrow and slimming appearance created by the pointed toe and elevated arch. Fashion historian Nancy Rexford writes that small feet were read as a sign of femininity, delicacy, and propriety, whereas large feet in “coarse shoes” symbolized lower class status and a lack of refinement.<sup>237</sup> She adds that

for women who procured small feet by wearing tight shoes, the discomfort was only increased by lasts<sup>238</sup> that had no relationship to the natural shape of the feet. In one of the worst periods, the mid-1890s, vamps<sup>239</sup> were drawn out in long ‘needle points.’ When this went out of fashion, toes became oval but still so shallow there was insufficient room for the foot.<sup>240</sup>

This pointed and artificial look of the front of the foot was in part related to the long skirts fashionable at the time, which only allowed the front portion of the shoe to peak out from under the floor-length skirt. A small and dainty point protruding from underneath the cascade of skirts gave a delicate and dainty appearance to the mostly hidden foot. In regard to the changing fashions of the twentieth century, Rexford notes “once the entire foot was visible all the time, rather than merely peeping in and out, the

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<sup>237</sup> Nancy Rexford, *Women’s Shoes in America, 1795-1930* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2000), 62.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. Lasts are models that approximate the size and shape of the foot, used by shoemakers in the construction of shoes. According to Rexford, the lasts used by many shoemakers in the construction of mid to late nineteenth century women’s shoes did not mirror the actual shape of the human foot all too closely, making the shoe dictate the form rather than the foot.

<sup>239</sup> The shoe “vamp” or “upper” is the portion of the shoe that attaches the sole of the shoe to the foot.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 63.

contrast between large-footed reality and pygmy-footed fashion plate must have come as something of a shock.”<sup>241</sup>

In addition to providing the false illusion of a tiny female foot and constricting the actual foot into binding footwear, the nineteenth-century shoe also affected women’s posture and gait. Much to the amusement of satirists, the female form took on a strained and artificial silhouette and an awkward gait that lent itself to ridicule and derision. One such example can be found in the November 1869 issue of *Harper’s Bazar*, the American sister publication of *Der Bazar*,<sup>242</sup> showing a caricature of a woman walking outdoors, hunched over and using an umbrella much like a cane to help steady herself. At first glance she appears to be elderly and frail, but a closer look reveals that she is simply suffering from the compound effect of being corseted, wearing a rear-bustled long and narrow skirt, and shuffling along in her high heeled shoes. The illustration is titled “the Grecian Bend,” and is further elucidated with the caption “Does not Tight-Lacing and High Heels give a Charming Grace and Dignity to the Female Figure?”<sup>243</sup>

Caricaturists and satirists were not alone in chiding the heeled shoe along with the corset for harming women’s bodies, postures, and mobility. According to Rexford, when heels came back into fashion in the 1850s, critics cautioned against the unpleasant aesthetic effect this could have on women’s postures, warning that they might end up looking more like a “leaning tower” rather than a “graceful pillar.”<sup>244</sup> The problem of the

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>242</sup> Rexford, 65. “The Grecian Bend,” *Harper’s Bazar*, November 1869. For more on *Harper’s Bazar* and its relation to the German *Der Bazar*, see “Chapter One: Nineteenth-Century Fashion Industry and Magazine Culture on an International Playing Field” of this dissertation.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 64.

posture-altering high heel was compounded by the effect of the inflexible corset, which limited the natural pelvic tilt of the wearer. This made for a locked knees effect, which in turn forced the wearer to tilt forward in order to keep her balance. Besides disfiguring a woman's posture and gait, this type of footwear actually physically restrained her mobility. This restraint produced by the combination of the corset and the heeled shoe meant that the wearer was unlikely to engage in strenuous or difficult activities, as was communicated by the precarious movement of the body when corseted and heeled.

Noteworthy, however, is that this constraint in mobility was precisely the point of such footwear. The very message that declared to the world that its wearer was not in need of sturdy and dependable shoes was what made such whimsical footwear popular for women of the middle and upper classes. Immobility, leisure, and inactivity were read as synonymous with aristocracy, wealth, and the freedom to do nothing. As fashion historian Philippe Perrot notes in his work *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie*, high-heeled shoes “proclaimed the idleness of their owners, or at the very least the impossibility of their doing any work that required them to really use their bodies.”<sup>245</sup> In addition to functioning as a marker of class, they also functioned as a dictum of gender, as “shoes forced [women] to stay within certain socially valorized spaces.”<sup>246</sup> The fashionable shoe for women thus evoked the paradoxical message of both freedom and constraint; the wearer was at once wealthy and powerful enough to have freedom from work and physical demands, yet was also constrained and restricted by her role and ability only to inhabit “socially valorized spaces.”

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<sup>245</sup> Philippe Perrot. *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 106.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

Perrot also addresses the fetishistic nature of the pointed toe: “ever since it [the shoe] was completely hidden by dresses, it became the object of a universal, ardent, and fanatical cult.”<sup>247</sup> “To speak of shoes,” he adds, “is above all to evoke what they *tightly enclose* and also to recall what shoes *prolong*: ankles and calves.”<sup>248</sup> The adjectives Perrot uses to describe the shoe’s qualities could easily be employed to describe the corset (tightly enclose) or the crinoline (prolong). Much like the corset and the crinoline, the shoe functioned as a tool to mold and shape a part of the body to fit certain aesthetic goals and expectations. Its ability to shield the foot and protect it from the ground or elements of nature became a mere byproduct of its more imminent purpose of defining, elongating, narrowing, and making the foot fit for ocular consumption. Perrot further adds that the shoe held such power over the beholder because it also served to hide those parts of the body (the calves and ankles) that were not to be seen in public, their erotic value heightened by their relegation to the private and taboo.<sup>249</sup> In this regard as well, the shoe mirrored the function of the crinoline, which eroticized the body below the waist by rendering it obscure with yards of fabric and an abundance of petticoats.

In addition to the more delicate and colorful pumps of the period, women’s shoes also came to include the laced black boot, which was loosely patterned after the boots commonly worn by men at the time. Mitchell notes that however similar in name, boots for men and women differed significantly in function and design: “While men wore sturdy leather boots suitable for an active outdoor life, women wore ankle boots, usually

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., emphasis mine.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

with cloth uppers, under long, full skirts which made movement difficult and were impractical for anything other than an inactive life in a domestic setting.”<sup>250</sup> Perrot, too, writes that although the boot offered a more practical option for women interested in a more active lifestyle, this style of shoe also came with its own set of limitations.

According to Perrot,

the other important function of boots and ankle boots was to hide unsightly bumps and to squeeze feet that were flat or too large into their leather shafts to make them appear slender and elegant. This, too, was a task of obliteration, cleansing, or concealment, by means of an envelope that could relieve the body of its shameful stigmata even when it could not erase them.<sup>251</sup>

Here, once more, the connection between the corset and the shoe comes to light; both serve to conceal, make slender, and obliterate unwanted mass and proportions. Moreover, Perrot points to the symbolic nature of the “immaculate” black boot that was shined to perfection and that offered any speck or mark of dirt as a reflection on the wearer’s ability to remain clean and orderly in more than simply an aesthetic way. The cleanliness and brilliance of the black boot served as a visual reminder of the cleanliness and respectability of its wearer. This became even more of an obsession, once “glazing”<sup>252</sup> the boot became part of the fashion requirements of the early nineteenth century. The perfectly glazed and shined boot could now reveal with distinct detail where the wearer had gone and how active he or she had been; every speck of dirt from the road or mud from the field could be read as a map for reconstructing the wearer’s mobility.

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<sup>250</sup> Mitchell, 42.

<sup>251</sup> Perrot, 123.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. Glazing is the process of applying sheen to the leather boot that gives the material a shine and brilliance otherwise lacking from natural leather. According to Perrot, this process became popular early in the nineteenth century and played into the bourgeois moral code that deemed cleanliness in appearance symbolic of a sound character and mind.

### III. Horseback Riding and the Nineteenth-Century Woman

Another way for the nineteenth-century woman to traverse space, other than by foot, was by horseback riding. For this, specific riding attire was necessary, particularly since women rode sidesaddle in the nineteenth century.<sup>253</sup> Nineteenth-century riding attire for women evolved out of earlier riding gear, taking on a very specific look by the 1850s (to which I will return shortly). During the seventeenth century, horsewomen wore bright red dresses and jackets to signal their equestrian status. The eighteenth-century horsewoman favored emerald green. By the mid nineteenth-century, however, riding attire for women disposed of all bright colors and bold embellishments in favor of a more somber and austere look. Around 1850, women's riding clothes became increasingly similar to men's fashions, favoring black, brown, grey, and navy.<sup>254</sup> This change had a two-fold effect: on one hand, it signaled a rebellion and departure from a mainstream femininity, and on the other hand, it implied a simple elegance associated with nobility and wealth. As art historian Alison David points out, "the Victorian sidesaddle riding habit was a paradoxical garment. It was a fashionable anti-fashion statement, masculine and feminine, practical yet alluring."<sup>255</sup> I will first address its status as an anti-fashion statement and then return to the subject of allure and nobility.

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<sup>253</sup> See Alison David, "Elegant Amazons: Victorian Riding Habits and the Fashionable Horsewoman," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30, no. 1 (2002): 179-210. The majority of horsewomen of the nineteenth century rode sidesaddle. This custom was not challenged until the 1880s and 90s, when a women's sport culture began to take shape, 'bloomers' became available as an alternative to skirts, and the advent of the safety bicycle prompted women to rethink their ability to ride and be mobile. Art historian Alison David writes, "suddenly a woman's asymmetrical perch in the saddle seemed like a burden to her: her lack of equilibrium had come to symbolize her lack of equality" 200.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 179.



What made the nineteenth-century riding attire for women an “anti-fashion statement” was its closeness to men’s fashion and its allusion to masculinity. As noted above, riding wear for women eschewed the colors typical of women’s fashions of the time in favor of more masculine-coded hues of brown, black, grey, and navy. In addition to color, the elements making up the riding outfit consisted of a mélange of feminine and masculine items. A typical riding suit for women was comprised of a long and full skirt, a corseted top over which a fitted jacket was layered, a tie, and finally, a small hat similar to a man’s bowler. The jacket, hat, and tie were all patterned after men’s wear whereas the full skirt, corseted top, and laced ankle boots were firmly anchored in women’s wear of the time. This gave the rider a hybrid look of sorts; feminine from the waist down while masculine from the waist up. David writes of this hybrid look, “even when the bell-like silhouette produced by the crinoline skirt was at its greatest width, the essence of the horsewoman’s garb was a lean, understated, and almost masculine simplicity.”<sup>256</sup> She goes on to remark that popular perception of the modern horsewoman deemed her “rebellious,” “a sexual threat,” and gender “ambiguous.”<sup>257</sup> In fact, the French called the sidesaddle riding habit a *costume amazone* and the rider herself an *Amazone*, calling on the well-known image of the one-breasted and powerful women warriors. David attributes this anxiety surrounding the image of the horsewoman to a fear of changing social roles and gender reform: “wearing a riding habit conferred a power that was not

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 180.

normally accorded to women in Victorian society, marking them as both potentially dangerous and capable of physical activity, if in a restrained sense.”<sup>258</sup>

For all the rebellion and non-conformity attributed to women’s riding attire, the overall image of the woman on horseback was still remarkably feminine and in line with traditional understandings of womanhood. For one, the overall allusion to masculine dress was considerably mitigated by the components still marking riding attire as decidedly feminine: the full skirt, the corseted midsection, the full blouse sleeves, and last, the unmistakably feminine posture of riding with both legs to one side. In fact, “decency” and “modesty” were next to looking fashionable the main concerns in creating riding attire for women. Comfort and practicality ranked last, often sacrificed to the more pressing concerns of rendering the horsewoman stylish, proper, and demure. Nineteenth-century riding manuals for women were thus less focused on the practice of riding and written more like popular conduct books of the time, instructing women on the proper etiquette fit for a woman “on a pedestal.”<sup>259</sup>

Thus, the woman on horseback was treated much like a statue or a moving bibelot that had to look just right. This was antithetical to the actual physical mobility that horseback riding was meant to provide, forcing contradictory expectations on the female rider who was expected to be both mobile and active as well as graceful and inert. Moreover, her quest for grace and modesty often led to the surrendering of safety. The main concern was for the rider’s skirt not to fly up or expose much of the legs while in motion. Various tricks were used to remedy this potential problem; including using a

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>259</sup> See Clarke J. Stirling, *The Habit and the Horse: A treatise on female equitation* (London: Smith, Elder, 1857).

profusion of fabric of which the sheer weight could anchor the skirt hem down. But this presented another worry in turn: “the yards of dangling fabric were another, more real danger to the horsewoman. Her skirt might become tangled in her running mount’s legs or caught on the protruding pommel of the saddle as she fell, causing her to be dragged along at high speeds and even trampled underfoot.”<sup>260</sup> Much like the crinoline,<sup>261</sup> the rider’s skirt could at a moment’s notice become a cage or a trap from which she could not easily escape.

The full sleeves fashionable during the mid nineteenth century – another inevitable component of a woman’s riding habit – presented a similar challenge. These sleeves were designed with aesthetics rather than function in mind and they often encumbered the free range of motion needed to guide the reigns of a horse. Additionally, the tight bodice of a corseted dress restricted the flexibility required to move with the horse and to assess, by turning one’s body, the terrain and surroundings. All of this added to the challenges presented by riding askew with both legs to one side and meant that horseback riding for women of the nineteenth century was as much a form of entrapment as it was of mobility.

This careful constellation of clothing, posture, and presentation comes mainly from the horsewoman’s association with nobility and aristocratic tradition. According to

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<sup>260</sup> David, 185.

<sup>261</sup> See Erika Thiel, *Geschichte des Kostüms, Die europäische Mode von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1980), 335. The crinoline was constructed in such a way that it required outside help to put on and take off and, once in place, looked and functioned much like a steel cage trapping the woman’s lower body within its casing. Because of the difficulties in getting out of a crinoline without additional help, there are rare but documented cases of women who died trapped within the crinoline and the layers of fabric upon it as they were caught near fires that caused their skirts to ignite. For more on the crinoline and the effect thereof on the female body, see chapter three of this dissertation.

David, the horsewoman was to represent “the epitome of cultivated elegance.”<sup>262</sup>

Horseback riding was not a pursuit for the working classes; it required a horse, the means for upkeep thereof, specialty clothing, accessories,<sup>263</sup> and was usually linked to leisure pursuits such as promenading or hunting. Horseback riding was thus an emblem of wealth and aristocracy.<sup>264</sup> Women riders were part of an iconography familiar to most as portraits of aristocratic women on horses became popular in the seventeenth century and continued to be perpetuated by the many queens who continued to pose this way.<sup>265</sup> The woman on horseback was thus associated with luxury, “country estates,” “equestrian visits,” and “fashionable sociability.”<sup>266</sup> She was a moving and elevated representation of idealized femininity and conspicuous nobility. In this case, her upright position on the horse and her donning of darker-colored and masculine-cut riding apparel did not signal power, non-conformity, or rebellion but was rather a distinct and unmistakable sign of her class, wealth, and adherence to tradition. In fact, one nineteenth-century riding manual, which reads much like a conduct book of the time, suggests that the horsewoman use her access to traditionally male dominated spheres to her “advantage in the marital chase.”<sup>267</sup> In sum, the role of riding attire was a complex one, signaling both

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<sup>262</sup> David, 179.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 187. A good riding habit, including hat, boots, and proper garments would cost around 20 pounds, at a time when “fifty pounds could outfit an economical lady for the entire London season.”

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 181. Riding was expected of women of the upper class; it signaled proper upbringing and refinement. Noteworthy is that when bourgeois women took to horseback riding, their act connoted rebellion and a departure from proper femininity: “Though aristocratic ladies had always been afforded considerable freedom in riding dress and behaviors, the bourgeois horse-woman emulating the traditional pursuits of the aristocracy challenged class and gender boundaries.”

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>267</sup> As quoted in David, 194.

acquiescence to a long standing social order and understanding of nobility and femininity, as well as a departure from such norms and a rebellion against the status-quo. Footwear, on the other hand, was less complex in terms of its symbolic significance and was largely implemented as a way to signal class and gender belonging in a more predictable and straight-forward manner.

The following sections will analyze how footwear and riding attire figured within the pages of the fashion magazine *Der Bazar*, as they related to notions of class and gender. I will then turn to the works of Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner Eschenbach, and Louise Otto, who “wrote back” to the popular discourse on these items by presenting their take on women’s footwear and the image of the modern horsewoman in their fiction and non-fiction alike.

### **III. Footwear and Mobility in *Der Bazar*, *Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung***

The pages of *Der Bazar* were filled with illustrations and descriptions of the latest trends in footwear. Images of women in riding attire were featured less regularly although they did appear every once in a while. I will first describe how footwear and walking were presented to the readers of *Der Bazar* and then address the topic of riding and riding attire.

Shoes, in all their intricate glory, became a regular component of the magazine’s focus on fashion and consumer goods. Many issues contained multiple page spreads of fashion items of which footwear was likely to be a part. Delicately laced ankle boots, pointed toes with high arches, and intricate pumps with silk, satin, and embroidered embellishments made up the gamut of nineteenth-century footwear for women. Just as

Rexford described it, the images in *Der Bazar* show dainty tips of shoes peeking out from underneath layers of fabric, giving the illusion of a much smaller and narrower foot than possible. Not only adult women but young girls featured in the magazine are also shown wearing similar types of footwear. Theirs is more easily seen, as the typical hem for girls ended much higher on the leg than those of adult women, leaving the ankle and foot exposed. The shoes of choice for young girls (and boys) were predominantly ankle boots with front lacing, a raised arch, and a small heel much like the boots made fashionable for adult women at the time.

Examples of children dressed to mirror adults, down to the intricate and high-heeled footwear, appeared frequently on the front cover of *Der Bazar* or in illustrations within the magazine. Later issues of the magazine began running full-page lithographs in color, often inserted after the title page and functioning as a removable poster of sorts. These poster-like inserts appeared after the introduction of color images in the 1880s and consisted of a large fashion plate with the magazine's title inscribed below. The color insert to appear in the April issue of 1882 features a young girl in an elaborate dress and hat flanked by two adult women in equally ornate attire.<sup>268</sup> The girl is shown looking up at the woman on her right while the figure on her left is depicted as reaching for the child's hand, indicative of her maternal role. Both women are dressed in floor-length gowns in rich, saturated colors. Their small waistlines are cinched in place by a corset, their hair is elaborately coiffed underneath flower-adorned bonnets, and they both carry umbrellas – the fashionable accessories for outdoor “walking costumes.”

The young girl positioned at the center of the image functions as a focal point between the two adults. Although the muted colors of her dress make her a less striking

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<sup>268</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, April 1882.

figure, her diminutive size and center placement make her unique in this composition of three figures, and the eye is naturally drawn to her. She is a small adult in the making; her hair is just as elegantly coiffed as that of the two women next to her, and she too wears a flower-adorned hat. Her dress, though less cinched at the waist than that of her companions, is also made of volants, lace, and delicate layers of fabric heaped upon more fabric. On her feet, which are the most visible of the three due to her shorter hem length, she wears dark ankle boots laced up to the calf with a pointed toe and high heel just as women's fashion of the time dictated. In short, she is the perfect copy of her adult companions, down to the unlikely footwear for a child of her age.

Not only did children mirror adults in the images of the magazine, but dolls too were dressed to mirror the look of "proper" children, who in turn, mirrored their elders. This top-down structure ensured that wherever children looked for role models – be it in play with their toys or to other family members in their home – the desired look and presentation of what was deemed proper and, by extension, moral was always present. One feature in a November 1881 issue of *Der Bazar* demonstrates this mimicry, showing several examples of children's dolls all made and dressed to look like miniature adults. The page is titled "Für unsere Kinder"<sup>269</sup> (for our children), and at a first glance, it appears to be showing children wearing clothing approximating adult fashion: a fitted jacket and hat for the boy, frilly dresses with nipped-in waists for the girls. The captions, however, indicate that the depictions are not of children but of dolls. These life-like dolls present much like children dressed in adult clothing. The child's toy is thus made to look at once like the child to which it will belong and the adult that the child is supposed to

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<sup>269</sup> "Für unsere Kinder," *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, November 1881.

emulate. The children's dolls of this feature demonstrate the blurring of boundaries between what a child and an adult were understood to look like. In short, the middle and upper-class nineteenth-century child was little other than a miniature adult. Features from *Der Bazar* like the one described above show how fashion permeated the social fabric of the nineteenth century; from dolls, to children, to adults, the idealized image of masculinity and femininity was present on every level.

On the subject of nineteenth-century children's dolls, Leigh Summers, author of *Bound to Please*, writes that during the first half of the century dolls resembled the young girls who played with them. That is to say, they looked like children. The role of the doll was "that of a *confidante*."<sup>270</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, however, dolls were less like an appropriately matched friend and more like an adult role model. According to Summers, "child-like dolls had vanished, to be replaced by 'fashion-plate' dolls that were replicas of curvaceous adult women with 'nipped in waists and broad hips.'"<sup>271</sup> The dolls in the November of 1881 issue of *Der Bazar* do not fit the description of Summer's "curvaceous" and "adult" like dolls entirely but they do read as "fashion-plate" miniatures in more ways than not. Noteworthy is that both the male and female dolls are shown wearing nearly identical footwear: heeled and laced ankle boots. The same type of footwear that the young girl in the April 1882 color lithograph (described above) is wearing and that Perrot describes as prohibiting "exertion and physical mobility" and declaring "the idleness of their owners."<sup>272</sup> Mitchell describes these heeled boots as

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<sup>270</sup> Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (New York: Berg, 2001), 73.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Perrot, 106.



“impractical for anything other than an inactive life.”<sup>273</sup> The images of women wearing impractical shoes not only portrayed immobility and inactivity as a desirable female quality but also enforced the idea that idleness was the privilege and benefit of belonging to a certain gender and class.

Moreover, children pictured in the above-described fashion serve the function that Perrot ascribes to women in *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie*. According to Perrot, as men’s fashion became increasingly muted, austere, and somber, the colorful and elaborately embellished garments worn by their wives, daughters, and sisters served as symbols of the wealth and prosperity not readily visible in the more simple and stark look of men’s garments: “The unchanged splendor of their [women’s] toilettes and the opulence of their flesh signified the social status and the monetary power of their fathers, husbands, or lovers, who amassed wealth but did not exhibit it.”<sup>274</sup> Perrot calls this “vicarious consumption.”<sup>275</sup> *Der Bazar* reveals how a similar function was ascribed to children’s clothing and accessories. The children depicted in their neatly composed outfits consisting of layer upon layer of well-cut garments and accessories, complemented by their polished and heeled shoes, signal their family’s respectability and wealth. Nowhere is this more evident than with the images of children’s footwear found in the magazine. Depictions of heeled shoes on both children and dolls demonstrate how symbolically laden those fashion items were, as their purpose was more illustrative than practical. At the cost of impairing a child’s movement and comfort, heeled shoes were chosen for their

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<sup>273</sup> Mitchell, 42.

<sup>274</sup> Perrot, 34-35.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 35.

“sign-value,”<sup>276</sup> which unmistakably communicated the child’s belonging to the middle and upper classes.

Whether this type of footwear was perceived as cumbersome or not (on children or on the women wearing them) is difficult to discern from the articles in *Der Bazar*. The texts found within *Der Bazar* show how such footwear – however impractical – was understood as a normal part of women’s dress. Moreover, texts that juxtaposed the fashionable footwear of German women with the footwear of women in other countries highlight a perceived level of autonomy and agency on the part of the German women in choosing which fashion trends to follow. As one February 1863 article of *Der Bazar* illustrates, women in German-speaking countries were presented as having a say in the formation of identity and a certain level of agency in the dissemination of gender appropriate behavior. Using the aforementioned example of Chinese foot binding as a foil, the article titled “Die kleinen Füße der chinesischen Frauen”<sup>277</sup> (the small feet of Chinese women) describes how femininity is enacted in the Chinese culture in comparison to the German-speaking world. The article begins with a fable meant to explain the history behind foot binding while simultaneously highlighting the submissive role of the Chinese woman.

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<sup>276</sup> As outlined in chapter one of this dissertation, I employ Philippe Perrot’s system of “sign-values” and “use-values” to explain the dual purpose of clothing and accessories. An item’s “use-value” relates to its function and practical purpose, while its “sign-value” communicates with the viewer information regarding the social class, age, profession, wealth, and gender of the wearer. According to Perrot, an item’s “sign-value” was often more significant and more influential in a subject’s choosing of said item than its “use-value,” as the communicative aspect of clothing came to play a dominant role in nineteenth-century Western culture. For more, see chapter one of this dissertation and Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>277</sup> “Die kleinen Füße der chinesischen Frauen,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, February 1863.

According to the article, the king of China ordered his wife's feet to be bound in a misguided attempt to protect and shelter her. Fearing that she would wander too far from the royal grounds and lose her way home, he ensured that she could not stray too far by rendering her physically immobile. The queen, not wanting to be isolated in this manner, declared it a fashion trend to have small, bound feet. The article ends with the moralizing conclusion that such extreme and hazardous practices would never take hold in Europe.<sup>278</sup>

So weit wie die chinesischen Damen haben aber die Europäerinnen den Gehorsam gegen die Gesetze irgend einer Beherrscherin der Mode doch noch nicht getrieben; ein Beispiel muthwilliger Verstümmelung irgend eines Gliedes ist uns noch nicht bekannt, es sei denn die der Märchenwelt angehörige Erzählung 'vom gläsernen Pantoffel', die sich variiert in China täglich wiederholt.<sup>279</sup>

According to the conclusion of the article on Chinese foot binding, such willful and harmful manipulation of the body's natural shape is unknown to European women, who would only encounter examples thereof in children's tales and the make-believe world. Overlooking the fact that a culture's folk tales and children's stories often reveal the fears, beliefs, and values of a group in an exaggerated manner that is meant to instruct, the author of the article denounces the practice of body modification as something entirely foreign to European women.<sup>280</sup> The article recounts, through the lens

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<sup>278</sup> For my reading of how this article contributes to a xenophobic discourse that pitted the non-German and non-Western Other against the image of the 'moral and good' German woman in *Der Bazar*, see chapter two of this dissertation, titled "The National".

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 47. Translation: "European women have not, however, taken their obedience to the keepers of fashion trends to such an extreme as Chinese women have. We know of no examples of such voluntary disfigurements of a body part, barring the example of the 'glass slipper' found in the world of fairy tales, one that is daily reenacted in various incarnations in China" (49).

<sup>280</sup> Not only does the foot binding article ("Die kleinen Füße der chinesischen Frauen") imply that European women have a greater amount of agency in deciding which trends to follow, it also suggest that fashions, which constrict and modify the body, are something foreign to the Western world. This reads in stark contrast to the evidence presented with such features as "Geradehalter für junge Mädchen" (*Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, June 1857, 165), which depict youth corsets intended to correct and mold

of foot binding, how women of the Chinese culture have a lesser degree of autonomy and agency than their European counterparts.

Moreover, the article indicates that a Chinese woman's geographical mobility is limited to the immediate home and surrounding grounds, whereas it implies that the European woman, in her refusal of any identification with the Chinese women of the story, has a much larger sphere of personal and geographical mobility at her disposal. Whether this is an accurate portrayal of women's autonomy and geographical mobility in Germany is another story. The important point here is the construction of a discourse in the magazine that presents the German woman as having a certain level of autonomy, freedom, and mobility not granted to women of other cultures.

In contrast to the article on Chinese foot binding that presents the German woman as mobile and sovereign, the following story featured in *Der Bazar* a decade later presents a more nuanced understanding of the German woman's freedom to move and engage with the outside world. The story, titled "Ein Spaziergang im Salon," was a featured narrative written by Louise Mühlbach and offered in regular installments with the accompanying subtitle of "Plauderei von Louise Mühlbach."<sup>281</sup> As the title suggests, the author offers the reader a travel narrative that explores the world from the confines of one's own home. She terms this "spazieren sitzen" (to sit on a walk) rather than

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young girls' bodies. It also discounts the many features of tightly-corseted women and the controversy surrounding the ill effects of corseting and tight-lacing (as outlined in chapter 3 of this dissertation). In short, the foot binding article in *Der Bazar* highlights the subjectivity with which the matter of body modification and fashion was treated, presenting a viewpoint that is both culturally biased and steeped in an Imperialist ideology. Discounting the ways in which Western women are subject to fashion and its impact on the body, the article dismisses the practice of willful injury in the name of fitting in with social norms as something unique to the Eastern Other. For more on corseting and its consequences, see chapter three of this dissertation. For more on the juxtaposition of German women versus the Other, see chapter two of this dissertation.

<sup>281</sup> "Ein Spaziergang im Salon," *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, April–June, 1873, 109-174.

“spazieren gehen” (to go on a walk).<sup>282</sup> The narrator proceeds to take her friend Auguste on a trip through time and space by using objects from within their sitting room as catalysts for her stories about well-known royals and society people. In the concluding paragraph of the last installment of the story, the hostess and narrator gives her friend Turkish coffee bought in Turkey and cigarettes from Egypt filled with Egyptian tobacco. They drink from a Chinese tea set and play with the sound of foreign words on their tongues, such as the Arab word *Bukra* for tomorrow.<sup>283</sup> Amidst this mélange of exoticism, Auguste, the listener and stand-in for the reader, is urged to enjoy these treasures from a distant world within the confines of her home, using her imagination to explore the far away lands in which these items originated. The narrator thus concludes: “und wollen wir uns tief ins Herz eingraben das schöne Trosteswort der Araber: Bukra, fill mish mish! (Morgen, wenn die Pfirsich blühen!).”<sup>284</sup>

Although the reader is not told how the narrator came to amass such a collection of foreign goods, the idea of ‘spazieren sitzen’ and imaginative play as a way to explore the world suggests that she did accumulate them through her own adventures. The world created by Mühlbach in “Ein Spaziergang im Salon” is one of vicarious travel and imagined mobility. The two women know enough about the world and other cultures to imagine visiting and enjoying the sights, sounds, and tastes of foreign lands without actually leaving the safety and comfort of their home. Theirs is a mobility unhindered by

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 174

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. Translation: “Let us hold close to our hearts the beautiful saying of the Arabs: Bukra, fill mish mish! (Tomorrow, when the apricots bloom!).”

imagination yet confined by custom and ideology to the refuge of a domestic space deemed appropriate for their gender and class belonging.

The above-described story by Mühlbach suggests a different understanding of women's mobility from the article on Chinese foot binding from a decade prior. Mühlbach's narrative portrays the German middle and upper-class woman as confined to a similarly limited domestic space as the Chinese woman. While tightly bound feet circumscribe the Chinese woman's mobility, custom and tradition confines the German woman to her home. Although the foot binding article seeks to set the European woman apart from her Chinese counterpart, Mühlbach's story suggests that, in terms of mobility, the German woman, too, was relegated to experiencing life and adventures from the confines of her living room, indulging in vicarious travel and imaginative exploration rather than actual travel.

Despite these examples of confinement and immobility, the magazine also offers glimpses into footwear that conveys movement, speed, and adventure. Examples of women roller skating, narratives about toboggan rides in Canada, and winter scenes with skaters gliding across frozen ponds give a sense of momentum and athleticism that is otherwise scarce in appearance. The third January issue of 1858 offers a large-scale illustration of women ice-skating on a frozen pond with the caption "Das Schlittschuhlaufen" (ice skating) beneath it. The lack of additional information or textual elaboration around the image suggests that ice-skating was a commonly practiced winter activity familiar to most readers.

A more surprising cover illustration is the image on a 1878 issue featuring two women roller-skating in a rink as mentioned in the introduction. The flying scarves

around their necks hint at a certain speed of movement despite the narrowness of their ankle-length skirts. Peeking out from just below their hemlines are matching roller skates. A young boy is pictured off to their side, roller skates strapped to his feet as well. The caption below reads “Skating-rink Anzüge für Damen und Kinder” (skating rink outfits for women and children). As with the images of ice skating, the lack of contextual information surrounding the roller skating illustration suggests that this activity too was familiar to the average reader and not in need of explanation. The accompanying text surrounding the roller skating image is in fact strikingly unrelated to the image at hand; instructions for a “Wiegendecke mit Strickerei” (an embroidered cradle blanket) and “Garnitur zur Beinkleidern” (embellishments for trousers) are offered in the columns surrounding the illustration.<sup>285</sup>

The invention of roller skates can be traced back to the late sixteenth century. While scholarship on early roller skating is still scarce, what is known is that the first major roller-skating boom occurred during the late nineteenth century. In 1823, French mechanic M. Petibled secured the first patent for what he called his “Volitos” – flying shoes.<sup>286</sup> A report in the “Polytechnischen Journal” of 1824 made the “Volitos” known to German and Austrian consumers as well.<sup>287</sup> In Vienna, it soon became known as hybrid of sorts: “Bindeglieder zwischen Schlittschuh und Fahrrad,” fascinating consumers and inspiring inventors to create myriad of replicas with their own take on the original

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<sup>285</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*. Januray 1878.

<sup>286</sup> Gilbert Norden. “Schuhe zum ‘Eislaufen ohne Eis’ und ‘Spiegelglatte, kaum von einem Eisspiegel zu unterscheidende Laufflächen’: Eine Geschichte des Rollschuhes und der Rollschuhbahnen bis 1914 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Österreichs,” *Blaetter fuer Technikgeschichte* 60, 1998, 15.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

product.<sup>288</sup> In the 1860s and 1870s, roller skating rinks (following the model of ice-skating rinks) opened in metropolitan areas around Western Europe, with Paris, London, Brussels leading the way. In America, Cincinnati, Louisville, and New York were some of the first places to open roller-skating rinks to the public as early as 1865.<sup>289</sup> By the 1880s, roller skating became the popular sport of the era. This activity remained predictably isolated to the upper-class consumer, as it required the ability to purchase or rent the skates. As Austrian sociologist Gilbert Norden writes, it was a way for the wealthy to show off during their leisure time, as neither equipment nor access to rinks came cheap. Skating evenings became the perfect way for “höhere Töchter” (society girls) to be introduced in society under the watchful eyes of mothers and relatives.<sup>290</sup> By the 1890s, roller skating declined in popularity and most rinks were closed or converted to tennis courts.

With roller skating being such a popular pastime for the wealthy of the latter half of the nineteenth century, it comes as no surprise that *Der Bazar* did not deem it necessary to explain the image of the two roller skaters on its 1878 cover. The coverage of this activity also reinforces the idea that *Der Bazar* sought to target the middle to upper-class woman and to present an imitable lifestyle for those looking to climb the social ladder. The role that roller skating played during the latter half of the century also suggests that it was not as transgressive and surprising an image of mobility as the present-day viewer might think. Roller-skating rinks were little more than an extension of

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 15-16. Translation: “a cross between ice skates and bicycles.”

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>290</sup> Norden, 23.



otherwise sanctioned spaces for women; carefully controlled and monitored by family members and governesses as the roller-skating daughters made their début.

Horseback riding, although no more surprising an activity than ice skating or roller skating, was not featured regularly in *Der Bazar*. Prior to the invention of the safety bicycle,<sup>291</sup> walking and horse riding were the principle ways in which women could traverse space in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was particularly so in rural spaces not accessible via train travel.<sup>292</sup> But despite the attention paid to footwear and walking, little advice was offered as to what constituted proper riding attire. The abundance of riding manuals<sup>293</sup> reveals that there was a host of conventions as to how a woman should conduct herself on horseback, what she need wear, and how she might best navigate excursions that were likely to be in the company of (horse) men. *Der Bazar*, however, took less interest in presenting this topic to its readership and omitted

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<sup>291</sup> See Philip Gordon Mackintosh and Glen Norcliffe, "Men, Women and the Bicycle: Gender and Social Geography of Cycling in the Late Nineteenth-Century," in *Cycling and Society*. Eds. Dave Horton, Paul Rosen and Peter Cox (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 153-177 and Beth Muellner, "The photographic enactment of the early new woman in 1890s German women's bicycling magazines," *Women in German* 22, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 167-168. Until the 1890s, bicycling was almost entirely a male pursuit as the bicycles available were high wheelers, which were difficult for women to mount given the volume of their skirts and the elevated nature of the bicycle seat. In the 1890s, with the advent of the 'safety bicycle,' women took to cycling in unprecedented numbers. Cycling provided a faster and more convenient way to traverse space than on foot or by horse and it paved the way for changes to women's fashions (the introduction of the pantaloons) that were credited with heralding in a new image of femininity that was dynamic, mobile, and more independent. Although the bicycle presents an interesting and fruitful object of analysis when writing about women's mobility, it does not make an appearance in the writings by the women writers of this study nor does it become featured the fashion magazines of this study until the later issues of the turn of the century. For those reasons among others, the bicycle will not factor into the analysis of women's mobility presented in this dissertation.

<sup>292</sup> Horse carriages were also commonly employed, but these, like train travel, were not for the solitary woman to use at her will. Travel by carriage or train involved specific knowledge in handling equipment, it required the participation of third parties, and is not telling of a woman's geographical mobility since it cannot be divorced from a much more elaborate process than simply moving from one location to another. For this reason, this chapter focuses solely on geographical mobility that is more closely linked to personal and physical mobility: travel by foot or horse.

<sup>293</sup> See Stirling J. Clarke, *The Habit and the Horse: A treatise on female equitation* (London: Smith, Elder, 1857); Carter, *Instructions for Ladies in Riding* (London, 1783); and Alice M. Hayes, *The Horsewoman: A Practical Guide to Side-Saddle Riding* (London: W. Thacker, 1893).

writings and depictions of women on horseback save for the occasional lithograph accompanying a fictional story.

The omission of riding gear and articles directed at the horse-riding woman supports David's aforementioned observation that riding was a subversive practice when undertaken by the middle class woman. As David notes, the horsewoman – when taken out of the context of riding as part of the aristocratic tradition – was perceived as a threat to the normative performance of femininity. Her clothes (molded after men's fashion), her high seat on the horse (an animal she's tamed for her utility), and her accessories (the whip, the masculine hat, a cravat) all perform a sort of femininity that is incongruent with the more demure and delicate one presented in *Der Bazar*. According to David, the Western horsewoman “has always connoted sexual threat or ambiguous femininity.”<sup>294</sup> This is all the more the case when the middle class woman appropriates the image of the horsewoman from her aristocratic counterpart. When the latter undertook such action, she performed a femininity that was part of a long-standing tradition of the aristocrat on horseback; a romanticized image of power, wealth, and entitlement. The same act of riding, when undertaken by the middle class woman, was read as a transgression of sanctioned gender roles and a desire to be physically, geographically, and socially liberated.

As I have outlined in chapter one, the average reader of *Der Bazar* was likely from the middle class and thus, would not have partaken in horseback riding as part of an aristocratic tradition. While the magazine encouraged its readers to ape the aristocracy, emulating the aristocratic horsewoman could not result in the same effect as emulating

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<sup>294</sup> David, 180.

the theater-attending noblewoman or the ball gown-wearing noblewoman; the equestrian woman enacted a different form of performativity that threatened rather than supported the existing social order. As David writes, there was power, independence, and, to a certain extent, aggression to be read in a woman's desire to ride and "rebel." Not surprisingly, there are few images of the problematic horsewoman to be found within *Der Bazar*.

Examples of the modern horsewoman in the works of Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Louise Otto likewise point to the problematic and often subversive nature of riding and seeking personal and geographical mobility. Their "writing back" on this matter moreover suggests that it was not merely the middle class horsewoman that was read as transgressive and problematic, but rather, that the act of taking physical and geographical mobility into her own hands rendered the aristocratic horsewoman a threat to normative femininity as well.

#### **IV. Women Write Back on Horseback Riding and Traversing Space**

While examples of horseback riding do not figure as prominently in *Der Bazar*, there are a good number of examples thereof in the writings of Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach that give us an idea of what role this activity played in a woman's access to physical and geographical mobility. I will first address the topic of riding and then return to footwear in an analysis of mobility within the works of these three women writers. Ebner-Eschenbach's story *Komtesse Muschi* most vividly brings to life the image of the modern horsewoman. Although the countess has access to horses and riding culture as part of her class belonging, the way the text describes her passion for riding indicates

that her involvement moves beyond the bibelot-style posing on a horse typical of the aristocratic horsewomen described by David. Instead, Muschi is described as a talented and adventurous rider, opting for the more difficult courses and eagerly galloping or jumping over hurdles. She is a self-proclaimed “Sportkomteß,”<sup>295</sup> knowledgeable in the subject of hunting, riding, and horse training. The association with sports and athleticism comes up frequently in the story, with Muschi described as having “Sportshände”<sup>296</sup> (hands fit for sport), as using “Jockey-Ausdrücke”<sup>297</sup> (jockey expressions), and as being completely absorbed by her passion for horses and riding: “[Muschi] weiß denn von nix zu reddn als von die Pferd.”<sup>298</sup>

Muschi’s obsession with horses and expertise at riding goes beyond a mere eccentricity. The relationship between the countess and horseback riding signals her transgression of normative gender roles and her association with masculinity. Not only is she described as using “Jockey” language, she’s referred to as a “Kerl,” a “Freund,” and other such monikers appropriate to a male companion.<sup>299</sup> Her mother and father, who are to be read as examples of appropriate gender expression, spend their time embroidering and reading the sports pages respectively. Here, too, the reader is shown how Muschi is more closely linked to the masculine-coded behavior modeled by her father than the more appropriately feminine behavior demonstrated by her mother. On the one hand, Muschi can be read as representative of a new type of femininity: active, outdoorsy, strong-

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<sup>295</sup> Marie von Ebner Eschenbach, *Komtesse Muschi* (Munich: Aremis Verlag, 1984). 46.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 25. Translation: “[Muschi] doesn’t know how to talk about anything other than horses.”

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 28.

willed, and irreverent. While her mother can be read as representing an outdated version of femininity, Muschi demonstrates how a new generation of women understood their place and role in society. This kind of reading, however, does not account for Muschi's isolated status in her social circle and the way in which she is viewed as an eccentric by her peers and by the other females of her generation. In the end, Muschi can be viewed as representative of a marginalized and unique few: women daring to flaunt conventions and living outside gender boundaries. As Ebner-Eschenbach's story make clear, theirs is not an easy road taken, and Muschi is constantly depicted as the odd and eccentric one out. The narrative makes plain that hers is not a success story. Despite her receiving her parents' indulgent approval, society has no place for a woman like Muschi and she is cognizant of her failure to integrate herself into the role expected of her: "es ist nicht immer so angenehm, als man glaubt, eine Sportskomteß zu sein."<sup>300</sup>

Ebner-Eschenbach's story challenges David's aforementioned argument that riding was perceived as transgressive predominantly when undertaken by the middle-class woman. *Komtesse Muschi* demonstrates how horseback riding was seen as "rebellious," "a sexual threat," and gender "ambiguous"<sup>301</sup> when undertaken by an upper-class woman as well. Despite the class privilege ascribed to horseback riding, the galloping and hunting countess is no more integrated into her social circle than her middle-class counterpart would have been. Muschi's inability to fit in is signaled by her rejection as the count's love interest. Rather, he chooses the domestic and demure Clara as his future wife. In the language of nineteenth-century women's literature, Muschi's failure to find love and domestic contentment highlights the problematic nature of her

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 46. Translation: "it isn't always as pleasant as one might think, to be a 'sports countess.'"

<sup>301</sup> David, 180.

character. Too fierce and independent to conform to social gender norms, Muschi gains mobility at the cost of marriage and a partnership. Although the athletic horseback riding woman is a problematic figure, Ebner-Eschenbach does not omit her from her fiction but rather uses her to highlight the ways in which society is not ready to embrace a femininity that is dynamic, strong-willed, and geographically mobile. Ebner-Eschenbach is thus “writing back” to *Der Bazar* by presenting a fictional character that represents many traits not typically hailed as feminine or gender appropriate, challenging the staid images found within the pages of the magazine. While *Der Bazar* offered its readership an idealized image of femininity, works such as Ebner-Eschenbach’s *Komtesse Muschi* show that nineteenth-century women writers understood gender performance to exist outside of the more simplistic images proliferated by fashion magazines and sought to offer readers counter-images to the fashion plates prevalent in women’s periodicals.

Ebner-Eschenbach’s story *Komtesse Paula* offers a similarly strong female character that exists outside of nineteenth-century gender norms. As with *Komtesse Muschi*, horseback riding is first introduced to establish Paula’s strength and independence. Paula regularly rides with her father and their forester, rivaling the men in her company with her skilled hunting abilities. When Paula aims and shoots a deer, the forester marvels at the precision with which she executed the “kapitaler Schuß.”<sup>302</sup> As with Muschi’s parents, it is Paula’s father who rides while Paula’s mother and sister are never described as riding, hunting, or conversing about horses. Paula’s horse riding skills are not, however, part of a new normalized femininity, and just as with Muschi, they are

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 416. Translation: “an admirable shot.”

demonstrative of her being eccentric, strong-willed, and rebellious. In the words of her peers, a woman like Paula is “unelegant.”<sup>303</sup>

Paula differs from Komtesse Muschi, however, in that she eventually ceases to hunt and ride after a traumatic outing during which she shoots and kills a mother deer, unknowingly orphaning her fawn. Paula is filled with remorse and vows never to shoot an animal again. Paula’s father is disappointed by her decision, mocking her “weak feminine constitution,” and dismissing her vow as a mere whim. This very duality in Paula’s character of strength and weakness, passion and compassion, continues throughout the story in her ongoing struggle to adhere to social and familial expectations while following her own will and reasoning in determining what is “right.” While Muschi is resolute in her decision to reject a normative femininity, Paula is shown as struggling to find a middle ground; she submits to her parents’ wishes, she cares about the opinion of others, she looks up to her older (traditional and feminine) sister, yet she has her own understanding of society and morality that informs her worldview.

Paula’s defiance of normative femininity is signaled not only by her skilled horseback riding and hunting (typically masculine traits), but also by her intellect and quest for knowledge (traditionally male-dominated pursuits).<sup>304</sup> While Paula’s father is supportive of her horseback riding and hunting (as something they can enjoy together), he

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<sup>303</sup> Ebner Eschenbach, Marie v. “Komtesse Paula,” In *Gesammelte Schriften von Marie von Ebner Eschenbach*, Vierter Band. Berlin: Verlag von Gebrüder Paetel, 1893. The terms “elegant” (elegant) and “unelegant” (not elegant) come up repeatedly during the story as a way to distinguish between the members of the upper class, who also adhere to class dictated behaviors and appearances, and to those who either shun those norms or do not belong to the upper class. Paula establishes herself as “unelegant” by her own words and her repeated mockery of those who she deems “elegant.”

<sup>304</sup> I will return to Paula’s interest in knowledge and learning with a more in-depth analysis in chapter five. Chapter five also analyzes the link between knowledge and education and social mobility as presented in *Der Bazar* and by Ebner-Eschenbach, Mayreder, and Otto.

is mistrusting and suspicious of her desire to read and educate herself. He only desires a “gute ‘oberflächliche’ Erziehung”<sup>305</sup> (“nice ‘superficial’ education) for his daughter. “Eine gelehrte Frau,” he argues, “das ist die größte von allen Kalamitäten.”<sup>306</sup> Paula’s athleticism paired with her intellect and independent mind mark her as an outsider and a woman rebelling against her “natural” role in society. She is therefore met with suspicion by others and labeled as “unelegant,” a euphemism for an undesirable person. Her horseback riding and hunting are introduced at the beginning of the story, suggesting that the nineteenth-century reader would have understood the symbolism implied in such activities. Ebner-Eschenbach begins the narrative with images of Paula riding and hunting because of the very connotations they carried and implications of gender rebellion understood by readers. While images of the horseback riding woman are scarce in the fashion magazine *Der Bazar*, they function to communicate strength, independent thought and will, and rebellion from the status-quo in Ebner-Eschenbach’s stories *Comtesse Paula* and *Comtesse Muschi*.

## V. Women Write Back on Footwear and Traversing Space

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, women’s footwear figured prominently in the women’s fashion magazine *Der Bazar*. Women’s shoes were not only featured in lithographs depicting women in the home or outdoors, but also frequently highlighted in entire page spreads dedicated to footwear alone. Fashionable shoes were presented as an integral part of the middle and upper-class woman’s outfit, signaling class and gender

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<sup>305</sup> Ebner-Eschenbach, *Comtesse Paula*, 411.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 419. Translation: “an educated woman ... that is the biggest of all calamities.”



belonging equally as much as her choice of dress. Rosa Mayreder and Louise Otto, in their discussion on the construction of nineteenth-century femininity, point to footwear as both symbolic of and responsible for women's limited access to various spaces. "Writing back" to fashion magazines such as *Der Bazar*, which approached women's footwear from the perspective of a culture and fashion industry looking to promote the latest trends, the women writers of this study offered a more critical take on the subject. Theirs are narratives that point to the limiting nature of footwear designed for its aesthetic appeal and its sign-value rather than for function and use. Moreover, Mayreder and Otto suggest that the damage done by such footwear moves beyond simply restricting the middle and upper-class woman's mobility and can be read as symptomatic of a society that does not consider a woman's physical and geographical mobility as a basic right.

Mayreder addresses footwear as it relates to women's physical and geographical mobility in her work *Sein Ideal*. The story centers on a young married couple consisting of the staid bureaucrat, Herr Müller, and his naive young wife, Emilie. The two are married after a brief courtship only to discover that they are little more than strangers to one another. This is further complicated by Herr Müller's disappointment after being disabused of his illusions of a perfect femininity ("das Ideal der Weiblichkeit")<sup>307</sup> when he comes to know his wife as more than just an idol from afar. Not only does Emilie disappoint her husband, but she does so in ways that highlight the paradox of being a nineteenth-century woman in theory versus in practice. Herr Müller is initially attracted to Emilie because she is delicate, innocent, and almost child-like in appearance. She is described as having "veilchenhafte Bescheidenheit" (a violet-like modesty),

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<sup>307</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Sein Ideal* (Pierson: Dresden, 1897), 2.

“mädchenhafte Scheu” (a girlish shyness), and “anmutige Sauberkeit” (being charmingly put-together).<sup>308</sup> Herr Müller’s fascination with Emilie borders on idolatry; she is the pinnacle of nineteenth-century femininity: demure, delicate, innocent, and mysterious.

After their nuptials, however, the image of idealized womanhood, so carefully constructed within the narrator’s mind, begins to fall apart, revealing a more realistic image of Emilie as a flawed and imperfect human being. Fashion, footwear, and material goods occasion the conflict between Herr Müller and his wife and become the lens through which the reader comes to understand their discord. Herr Müller becomes frustrated with Emilie for her preoccupation with their home and child; she spends too much time worrying about the neatness of their home, gossiping about their housekeeper, and worrying about “trivial” domestic matters. In other words, the very thing touted as a woman’s ultimate goal and purpose in life (motherhood and domesticity) in fashion magazines such as *Der Bazar*, becomes the source of marital conflict and disillusionment in Mayreder’s story. Herr Müller’s initial attraction to Emilie stems from her perfected performance of nineteenth-century femininity. Once married, however, he becomes disappointed to find little depth beyond that role, and his affections for his wife wane.

In an episode symbolic of their conflict at large, the newlyweds embark on their honeymoon trip only to discover that each had a different view of how the vacation would go. Herr Müller plans for the two to go hiking while Emilie begrudgingly labors to keep up. He expresses frustration at her inability to match his pace while she points to the difference in her clothing and footwear as hindering her agility: “du hast leicht

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

bergsteigen in Deiner Männertracht”<sup>309</sup> and “aber ich mit meinem langen Kleid und meinen dünnen Schuhen!”<sup>310</sup> In other words, Emilie cannot keep up with her husband because the clothes and shoes deemed appropriate for a woman of her class are not designed for physical activity and strenuous hiking. Mayreder’s story shows, in brief, a woman adhering to all the standards of femininity as presented in *Der Bazar*, yet encountering conflict and hardship based on gender performance nonetheless. Her husband comes to resent the very traits of traditional femininity that attracted him to her in the first place. Moreover, Emilie’s footwear, which is presented as synonymous with cultivation and upper-class belonging in *Der Bazar*, comes to symbolize physical and geographical limitation and an overall immobility in Mayreder’s take on women’s fashions.

Louise Otto, too, addresses women’s footwear in her essay “Moden,” beginning her essay with a description of the type of shoe popular in the mid nineteenth century: “Sie [die Fußbekleidung] bestand in niedlichen Schuhen von Seide, Serche, oder Glanzleder mit langen, schmalen, Bändern, die kreuzweis mehrmals über den Fuß gebunden wurden und darum kurzweg Kreuzbänder hießen.”<sup>311</sup> Otto describes the high-maintenance materials and countless ribbons of the shoe in order to illustrate how impractical this sort of footwear was. She goes on to bemoan the challenges presented by these shoes:

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 6. Translation: “it’s easy for you to hike in your man’s clothes.”

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., Translation: “but not for me, in my long dress and with my feeble shoes.”

<sup>311</sup> Louise Otto, “Moden,” *Frauenleben Im Deutschen Reich* (Leipzig: Verlag von Moriz Schaefer, 1876), 61. Translation: “It [footwear] consisted of dainty shoes made of silk, tweed, or patent leather with long, thin ribbons that were crisscrossed and tied over the foot, which were then referred to as ‘Kreuzbänder.’”

Aber was machten sie nicht für Noth! Bei jeder energischen Biegung und sonst noch bei unzähligen Gelegenheiten rissen sie von einander ab, wo sie angenäht waren, oder gingen sie mindestens auf, und mitten auf der Straße mußte ein Haus oder sonstiger stiller Winkel gesucht werden, den Schaden wieder zu reparieren.<sup>312</sup>

As the delicate footwear described by Otto was in constant danger of tearing or coming apart, it effectively rendered the wearer immobile and relegated her to safe, domestic spaces. As Otto describes, it was socially uncouth to stop and refasten one's shoe in public and quick refuge had to be found when one's footwear gave out in public. Not only did the delicacy of the shoe make walking difficult, but the whimsical design exposed much of the foot and stocking:

Ohne Bänder waren diese Schuhe auch kaum zu tragen gewesen, da zuweilen die Mode nur so wenig Oberleber für sie vorschrieb, daß es kaum bis an den Ballen reichte. Natürlich mußten die so sichtbaren Strümpfe immer blendend weiß sein, also war es bei jedem Ausgang eine Hauptfrage, ob nicht erst ein paar frische angezogen werden mußten – die der Staub wie Schmutz der Straße immer wieder verdarb.<sup>313</sup>

According to Otto, a woman's primary concern when leaving the house was keeping her feet and stockings looking clean and tidy. Given that city roads were filled with dust and debris, this was a hopeless venture, suggesting that the easiest way for a woman to adhere to the aesthetic code of the time was to remain indoors. Thus, footwear helped to enforce domesticity and immobility in the lives of middle and upper-class women.

Moreover, Otto writes that until the mid nineteenth century, the sole of the shoe had to be so thin and delicate that one could easily roll the sole around a finger: "Dabei

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 62. Translation: "Oh, how they did vex! With every energetic turn of the foot and with any other countless opportunity, they tore at the seams, or came undone in some other way, and one had to stop in the middle of the road to find a house or some other quiet corner where the damage could be repaired."

<sup>313</sup> Ibid. Translation: "Without ribbons, these shoes were nearly impossible to wear, as the fashion dictum of this time only allowed for the smallest amount of leather in making them, so that it barely reached to the ball of the foot. Naturally, the very visible socks had to always stay blindingly white, so much so that anytime one was about to leave the house, the question was posed as to whether one should first put on a fresh pair of socks – a pair that was then inevitably ruined by the dirt and dust on the street."

mußten diese Schuhe so dünne Sohlen haben, daß man sie um den Finger rollen konnte –  
welch ein Gegenblick sind jetzt dazu die jetzigen Stiefletten.”<sup>314</sup> While Mitchell, Perrot,  
and Rexford condemn the ankle boot as impractical and restrictive for women of the  
nineteenth century, Otto praises the turn in footwear from the beribboned shoes of the  
early to mid century to the more sturdy boots of the mid to late century. She lauds these  
boots for allowing women to be more active and mobile outside of the home. Yet she also  
notes that these sturdier boots were quickly labeled “unmoralisch” (immoral) and  
“unweiblich” (unfeminine).<sup>315</sup> As noted above, women’s ankle boots were patterned after  
men’s shoes and, despite notable differences such as a higher arch and taller heel, were  
similar enough in design and color that they appeared crude and “masculine” in  
comparison to the dainty and decidedly feminine footwear of the earlier century. Otto  
notes that ankle boots made it impossible for a woman to walk without making a sound,  
thus destroying the illusion of women gliding or floating soundlessly across the floor that  
the silk and satin shoes of previous popularity had sustained. The ankle boot with its  
added weight and bulk announced a woman’s arrival from afar, rendering it unpopular  
with its male audience for being “unweiblich, unästhetisch, emanzipiert” (unfeminine,  
unaesthetic, and emancipated).<sup>316</sup>

Although Mitchell writes that the increase in production of ankle boots for women  
during the mid nineteenth century signaled “the increasingly active lives women were

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid. Translation: “These shoes had to have such thin soles that they could be wrapped around one’s  
finger – what a contrast to the popular ankle boots of today.”

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

leading,<sup>317</sup> texts by nineteenth-century women present a more somber view. Mayreder and Otto's writings demonstrate that in the quest for physical and geographical mobility, women's fashion and footwear played a key role in prohibiting progress, even after the introduction of more practical and functional items such as the ankle boot. Writings such as the ones analyzed here demonstrate how women writing on the topic of fashion and popular footwear presented a more critical view than the one evident in fashion magazines such as *Der Bazar*. Similarly, Ebner-Eschenbach "writes back" to the images of femininity presented within *Der Bazar* with a take on femininity that is more active, more mobile, and to a certain degree, more masculine coded. Her horseback riding heroines offer a version of femininity that challenges mainstream understanding of womanhood as passive, docile, and confined to the home, while simultaneously grappling with society's unease with women overstepping their gender roles.

## **VI. Conclusion**

As this chapter demonstrates, footwear and riding attire can be read as symbolic of women's roles during the second half of the nineteenth century. Shoes that were designed to signal middle and upper-class belonging did not offer much in terms of function and literally solidified woman's imagined status as the immobile, static, and aesthetically pleasing "bibelot." Riding attire, although designated for an activity that is inherently mobile, was also designed with aesthetics and gender conformity in mind: cumbersome skirts, stiff and oversized sleeves, and unyielding corsets sabotaged the horsewoman's safety. Fashion magazines and conduct manuals focused on the fashion and appearances aspect of riding gear and stayed away from the image of the dynamic

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<sup>317</sup> Mitchell, 46.

and physically agile. In return, the women writers of this study sought to highlight how women's fashions, and in particular women's footwear, limited and constricted women's mobility and women's access to spaces outside of the home. Ebner-Eschenbach, in particular, used the image of the problematic horsewoman as a way to highlight the restrictions imposed on women in regard to mobility; both physical and geographical. The following chapter traces the discourses surrounding education and women's schooling in the fashion magazine *Der Bazar* and in the writings of Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach similarly to deconstruct the dialogue regarding women's place in nineteenth-century culture with a focus on mobility.

## Chapter Five: Education as Path to Social Mobility

### I. Women's Education in the Nineteenth Century

The women writers of this study, as noted in the previous chapters, presented a rather bleak view of how items such as the shoe, riding attire, or the corset impacted the freedom and movement of the nineteenth-century woman. Education, by contrast, was hailed by all as the key to social and personal betterment. Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Louise Otto Peters wrote separate but strikingly similar treatises on the value of education for girls and women in the quest for emancipation and gender equality. Moreover, education is the one topic on which the writings within *Der Bazar*, *Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung* and the texts by the women writers named above agree. While these sources disagreed ardently on the role of fashion and the above named accouterments of mobility, they came together in surprising harmony on the topic of education and schools for women. Both the magazines written for women and the texts written by women point to the importance of education in shaping the nineteenth-century woman's life for the better.

Nineteenth-century men and women were seen as playing vastly different roles in their family and social communities and thus were granted different access to education and higher learning. Historian James Albisetti, who has written one of the most comprehensive works on girls' schooling in Germany during the nineteenth century, argues that it was not until the mid to late century that women's education started receiving widespread interest and attention. In his work, *Schooling German Girls and Women*, Albisetti provides an overview of the ideologies and cultural understandings that shaped the state of women's education, naming eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel



Kant as an influential figure in the debate on how and to what end girls should be taught.<sup>318</sup> According to Albisetti, Kant's writings still resonated with thinkers of the nineteenth century, shaping the collective understanding of femininity and, by extension, the rights and freedoms accorded to women.

In his work *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant addresses the different attributes of the two genders, noting how these fundamental differences prepare men and women for different tasks and spheres of influence. Women, whom he terms the "fair sex," are predominantly marked by their outward appearance and aesthetic contributions: "Women have a strong inborn feeling for all that is beautiful, elegant, and decorated. Even in childhood they like to be dressed up, and take pleasure when they are adorned."<sup>319</sup> He terms men, by contrast, the "noble sex." He believes that they are characterized by their ability to reason, their physical strength, their resolve and action, and, above all, their engagement with the world of intellect. Whereas men have a "deep understanding" of the world around them, women merely have a "beautiful understanding" thereof.<sup>320</sup> According to Kant, "a woman who has a head full of Greek ... might as well have a beard; for perhaps that would express more obviously the mien of profundity for which she strives."<sup>321</sup> In other words, a woman striving to be educated makes for a poor imitation of man. Kant continues to enforce the association between men and intellect and women and aesthetics, writing, "No insult can be more painful to a

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<sup>318</sup> See James Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women. Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>319</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 76-77.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

man than being called a *fool*, and to a woman, than being called *disgusting*.”<sup>322</sup> Kant’s treatise on the genders establishes a mind body divide that leaves women firmly anchored on the side of the body, consequently excluding any respectable participation in matters of the intellect.

According to Albisetti, these were the ideas that continued to shape nineteenth-century thought on women’s education and schooling well after Kant’s lifetime. As a result, popular belief dictated that a woman’s sphere be the home and family. The idea of women learning a trade or pursuing higher education was not only considered counterproductive to men and women’s intended roles but also as unlikely to be successful.

Kant’s ideas about women’s inability to learn still loomed large:

Laborious learning or painful pondering, even if a woman should greatly succeed in it, destroy the merits that are proper to her sex, and because of their rarity they can make of her an object of cold admiration; but at the same time they will weaken the charms with which she exercises her great power over the other sex.<sup>323</sup>

A woman engaging in matters of the mind was warned about the dangers of “painful pondering” and the stigma of being “bookish,” which was often enough to discourage even the most ambitious from pursuing education and learning.

Moreover, Kant not only enforced the idea that women were incapable of learning to the extent of their male counterparts (“whatever one does contrary to nature’s will, one always does poorly,”)<sup>324</sup> he also argued that women did not *desire* higher learning and education: “A woman is embarrassed little that she does not possess certain high insights,

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 83. Emphasis in original.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 95.

that she is timid, and not fit for serious employments, and so forth; she is beautiful and captivates, and that is enough.”<sup>325</sup> The writings of nineteenth-century women make it plain, however, that this was not enough. Women activists and social reformers in Germany began demanding better schooling and increased opportunities for women outside of the home. Albisetti writes that beginning with the 1860s, education reform was at the forefront of the women’s movement,<sup>326</sup> a trend that is easily perceivable in the writings of *Der Bazar* and the three women writers of this study. As a result, the mid nineteenth century was marked by a clash in beliefs regarding women’s roles outside the home. On the one side, those still influenced by a century of thought born of Kant’s writings resisted any changes to traditional gender boundaries and gender-specific education, while others, such as Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach, argued for women’s rights to higher learning and better schooling.

“Miseducation” (*Verbildung*) is listed by Albisetti as one of the predominant fears of those opposing nineteenth-century education reforms.<sup>327</sup> Building on Kant’s idea that “whatever one does contrary to nature’s will, one always does poorly,” anti-reformers argued against women being educated as “nature” deemed it impossible for such a task to succeed. As a result, those women would fall victim to the results of “miseducation,” which presented in two ways; first, as a “bluestocking” or misguided scholar, and second, as a “woman of the salon.”<sup>328</sup> Both of these roles made women a detriment to their

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>326</sup> Albisetti, xiii.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>328</sup> Albisetti, 11. The two types of ‘miseducated’ women, according to Albisetti, are the “*gelehrtes Frauenzimmer*” and the “*Salondame*.”

families and society because they were likely to “neglect their children and home for other interests” and to be “undesirable as wives.”<sup>329</sup>

Mayreder, Otto, and Ebner-Eschenbach addressed society’s fear of the educated woman in their works of fiction and non-fiction alike. Mayreder and Otto in particular expressed the need for educational reforms in the schools available to girls, often drawing on their own frustrations and experiences growing up and meeting with resistance in their quest for education. Ebner-Eschenbach wrote less about women’s schooling and focused on the concept of education in general as a vehicle for personal betterment and growth. Her works highlight the personal improvement that comes from being educated, which in turn, makes for a better society. The education of one thus benefits all. *Der Bazar*, too, published a number of writings that focused on women’s education and the meager opportunities available to girls forced to work outside of the home and support themselves or dependents. However traditional *Der Bazar* may have appeared in terms of adhering to conservative fashion codes and enforcing an ideology of motherhood and domesticity, when it came to women’s education, the magazine did not withhold its support. The following sections explore how women’s education was presented in the pages of *Der Bazar*, followed by an analysis of how the women writers “wrote back” to (or, in this case, wrote along side with) popular discourses on schooling and education in both their private and public writings.

## **II. *Der Bazar* and Women’s Education**

The topic of women’s education finds its way into *Der Bazar* in various articles. Each issue of *Der Bazar* is comprised of texts that address a variety of topics: fashion, the

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

home, family life, national and international news, events surrounding the royal families, advertisements, and employment opportunities among others. The employment section in particular is noteworthy for showing the types of positions available to women of the middle class and thus providing insight into the level of education and professional training presumed of the average reader. By reading the advertisements against the grain – not in terms of what they reveal about the prospective employee’s future, but rather for what they reveal about her past, her education, and her training – we can construct an image of the typical middle class woman and her preparatory training in life. The majority of positions advertised were for governesses, travel companions, or social companions for lonely, elderly women. These classified advertisements targeted a very distinct readership; women, who were instructed in a foreign language and a musical instrument, who were versed in child care and domestic duties, and who were expected to pass as educated without seeming “bookish,” confrontational, or unfeminine.

Such advertisements for employment reveal how limited the prospects were for women seeking professional roles outside of the home. The texts within the magazine support this assessment and engage in a critical dialogue with the state of women’s opportunities in schooling and professionalization. One such example is a fictional article found in the January 1857 issue of *Der Bazar*, titled “Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden” (She wants to become a female companion).<sup>330</sup> The text is written by Ameln Bölte,

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<sup>330</sup> “Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden.” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, January 1857. The term “Gesellschaftlerin” is not easy to translate into English as it carries specific connotations that the English “female companion” does not quite mirror. In short, a female companion was typically a young girl of the middle class who was educated enough to be a skilled conversationalist, who could play an instrument and speak a foreign language, and who would then be hired based on her ability to navigate social situations and provide pleasant companionship. Her employer would likely be an older single woman, often widowed. Their relationship would mirror that of a niece/aunt or a granddaughter/grandmother. Women (as opposed to men) were especially in need of such arrangements as it was deemed improper and unsafe for them to

reproducing a dialogue between a young girl and an older woman on the topic of education and employment. The young girl is said to be fatherless and in need of work in order to support herself. She tells her interlocutor of her plans to become a “Gesellschaftlerin” (female companion) in order to earn a living, noting that she has all the skills necessary for such a position: that is, she can sing a little. The girl has, in effect, no skills and has not been prepared to do anything other than keep others company and amuse and entertain with her “charm.” The older woman with whom she is speaking bemoans the state of women’s upbringing and schooling, arguing that it puts them in the very predicament her young companion finds herself in: alone, financially in need, and with no actual skills on which to rely in order to find employment outside of the domestic realm. The unnamed older speaker states, “sie haben eigentlich Nichts gelernt, und seit der Zeit, wo sie die Schule verlassen, nur dem Müßiggange gelebt. Jetzt klopft die Noth an Ihre Thüre und – Sie hoffen durch neuen Müßiggang für Ihre Existenz sorgen zu können. Das geht nicht.”<sup>331</sup> When the young girl asks in frustration, “was soll ich denn aber thun?” (what am I supposed to do?) the older woman has nothing but the following curt reply for her: “etwas lernen” (learn something).<sup>332</sup>

To learn something, or rather, to become sufficiently educated to enter the skilled work force of the time, was easier said than done. Bölte is aware of that, describing the ways in which the social system of her time created these situations, leaving women in

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travel alone and such paid companionship provided the socially necessitated decorum to make travel and geographical mobility more readily available to them.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 4. Translation: “You have not actually learned anything, and since having left school, only lived a life of leisure. Now hardship is knocking at your door and you’re hoping to make a living out of more leisure. That does not work.”

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

insoluble predicaments: “Wahrscheinlich überließ er es dem Schicksal, wie so manche andere sorglose Väter es thun, Ihnen durch die Ehe eine Versorgung zu bereiten; das ist aber ein Hazardspiel, dessen Nummern nicht immer herauskommen; das große Loos ist selten und die Nieten sind oft noch der bessere Theil.”<sup>333</sup> In other words, Bölte places the blame with the girl’s father, and, by extension, with a patriarchal society that assumes that a woman moves from the parental household to that of her spouse always cared for by a father or husband. This treatment of daughters as perpetual dependents not only denied women a voice but also a viable chance at life outside of the domestic sphere. In addressing the young girl’s plight, Bölte draws attention to a greater social problem at hand: the lack of opportunities for and agency granted to women of her time.

Bölte ends the story by offering a solution that runs counter to the understanding of femininity during her time. Instead of steering the young girl away from labor and work with her hands, the older woman in the story advises her young listener to find employment doing some sort of craft (*Handarbeit*), deeming it much more honorable than the role of *Gesellschaftlerin*. She urges her to take pride in creating something and working with her hands rather than relying on superficial skills such as talking and socializing in order to earn a living. She concludes her lecture with an ominous “Dieser Rath gilt für Viele!” (this advice is meant for many!).<sup>334</sup> Thus, Bölte represents a contemporary voice offering an alternate understanding of gender and class roles.

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid. Translation: “He probably left it up to fate, like so many care-free fathers, to settle your future through a favorable marriage. This is a gamble, however, that does not often pay out; big wins are rare and the stakes are high.”

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, *Der Bazar*, by publishing this piece, demonstrates support of the women's movement in the realm of professional training and education, even if nowhere else.

A similar view is presented in an April 1861 article titled "Frauenerziehung" (women's education).<sup>335</sup> An anonymous author focuses on a particular kind of education – "die Eheerziehung" (education within marriage). The article calls on husbands to take seriously the responsibility of educating their wives in matters of the mind. The author then makes reference to education being a highly debated topic, noting however that less focus has been placed on "die Eheerziehung" in particular. According to the unnamed writer, husbands, who so often mock their wives for having a superficial understanding of politics and public affairs, are the very people responsible for offering their wives a better education in these matters. Although the focus here is on the marital interaction between the genders, the argument reads in many ways similar to that presented by Bölte in the previously described story. Whereas Bölte takes issue with the father figure and the latter author focuses on husbands, the social commentary is much the same; the nineteenth-century woman is the victim of a patriarchal social structure that stunts her intellectual growth and limits her existence to that of a perpetual dependent.

Yet another article on the topic of education appears in the July 1858 issue of *Der Bazar*, titled "Die Wahl eines Gatten" (To chose a husband).<sup>336</sup> In this article, it is Ameln Bölte once again who makes plain the difficulties women face in becoming educated, this time tracing the problem to the ineffective school system that does little more than fill girls' minds with useless information:

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<sup>335</sup> "Frauenerziehung." *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, April 1861.

<sup>336</sup> "Die Wahl eines Gatten." *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, July 1858, 210.



Wir lernen viel und wissen doch im Grunde nichts. Unsere kostbarsten und vorzüglichsten Mädcheninstitute liefern kein besseres Resultat. Keine einzige unserer wirklich begabten Frauen ist aus einem solchen Institute hervorgegangen, sie erzogen sich meistens selbst oder hatten Gelegenheit, kluge Männer reden zu hören.<sup>337</sup>

Bölte thus argues that educated women of her generation are not educated due to the school system in place but, rather, in spite of it. These are self-made women, who have taken their education into their own hands. Those, who are not as fortunate to take charge of their own schooling, are left without the tools to appreciate intellectual stimulation when they encounter it because they lack any formative training in subjects outside of the domestic. Bölte writes, “Ein gutes Buch bekommen wir nicht in die Hand, und gäbe man es uns, so hätten wir keinen Geschmack dafür. Und fehlt ja die Vorbildung zu allem, was man mit dem Verstande auffassen soll.”<sup>338</sup> Like the ones before it, this article too finds fault with the larger social system in place. Bölte, in effect, argues against nature as having determined women’s role and suggests that idle femininity is the result of the inescapable social system of the time. Without using the terminology that would later dominate the feminist movement of the twentieth century, Bölte presents an understanding of gender and class that is not steeped in biology but rather in culture.

Articles such as the ones named above show that *Der Bazar* was relatively progressive in addressing the state of women’s education. Regularly featured texts arguing for women’s rights to a better education demonstrate solidarity with the women’s movement in terms of school reforms. Although *Der Bazar* presented a traditional take

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 210. Translation: “We learn a lot and yet do not know much. Our most expensive and most prestigious girls’ schools do not yield better results. Not one of our most talented women comes from such a school, they are mostly self-taught women or women, who had the opportunity to learn from educated men.”

<sup>338</sup> Ibid. Translation: “Great books are not available to us and, should we happen upon one, we would not appreciate it. We lack the necessary training for all that is appreciated through reason.”

on femininity in terms of motherhood and marriage, it allowed space within its pages for writers to argue in favor of women's educational reforms and to critique existing social hierarchies that treated women as second-class citizens.

The story titled "Keiner und Meiner" presents a take on the education and domesticity debate from a different angle.<sup>339</sup> It features Karl Bergfeld, a young doctor, who agrees to take on his two nephews while their parents are away on vacation. Karl is faced with the challenge of trying to control two rambunctious boys while also vying for the interest of the beautiful Anna March. Karl's struggle is one that was likely familiar to many nineteenth-century women; trying to find time and room for one's personal interests while being entrusted with the care of children and family, whether one's own or those of an employer. As the story unfolds, Karl increasingly comes to realize how time consuming and all-encompassing childcare is and expresses surprise at how women manage to balance their domestic duties with any other activity at all:

Er schauderte zu denken, was aus ihm geworden wäre, wenn er um sieben, acht oder noch mehr Kinder zu sorgen gehabt hätte, wie es doch das Loos so vieler Frauen ist. Nur gerecht hätte er es in diesem Augenblick gefunden, wenn jeder Frau, der es gelungen, eine Anzahl Kinder groß zu ziehen, auf Staatskosten ein öffentliches Denkmal gesetzt werde.<sup>340</sup>

Karl thus voices the frustrations and grievances of likely many a nineteenth-century woman, who performed what was hailed as her most important role (motherhood) while receiving little recognition and reward for the daily toil that role entailed. Interesting to note is that these social observations are made in the voice of a male figure and thus the

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<sup>339</sup> "Keiner und Meiner." *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, February 1878.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 60. Translation: "He shuddered to think what would have come of him, had he had to care for seven, eight, or even more children, as was the fate of so many women. At this moment, he found it only just to recognize every woman who had raised a number of children by erecting a public monument in her honor at the government's expense."

author, Helene Stökl, employs a narrative strategy termed “narrative transvestism” by literary theorist Madeleine Kahn.<sup>341</sup> Here the strategy is employed to lend credibility and authority to the main character. By writing from the authoritative first person perspective of a male character, Stökl lends her social critique more force. Also noteworthy is that the male character of her story takes on a traditionally female role (raising children, doing housework) that lends the story a second layer of transvestism. In the end, “Keiner und Meiner” is the work of a female author writing from the perspective of a male character, taking on a traditionally female role, and praising the accomplishments of wives and mothers everywhere. The layers of role-playing, or transvestism, are much more involved than the term coined by Kahn implies; this complexity indicates that in order to be heard, women of the nineteenth century had to experiment with different voices and explore sophisticated narrative strategies.

In contrast with Stökl, the women writers of this study use the voices of their female figures to issue the loudest protests against inequality and women’s limited access to education and mobility. These figures have to fight against the tyrannical will of their fathers, often standing alone in their quest for education, independence, and social recognition. The following section will analyze how Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Otto presented the topic of women’s education and women’s activity outside of the home in their texts, both fictional and autobiographical.

### **III. Women Writers on Education**

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<sup>341</sup> See Madeleine Kahn, *Narrative Transvestism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

Education and reading come up again and again in works by Mayreder, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Otto. Often drawing on their autobiographical experiences, these writers addressed the role of education and reading as they pertained to the life of the nineteenth-century woman. Mayreder, who grew up as the middle child of sixteen, expressed from an early age her disappointment at not receiving the same education as her brothers. In her diaries, she laments the restrictions imposed on her learning due to her gender: “Ich gäbe Jahre meines Lebens, dürfte ich an ihrer Stelle lernen.”<sup>342</sup> Mayreder, who proved an apt student from an early age, did manage to persuade her father to allow her to learn Latin and Greek alongside her brothers. From an early age, Mayreder set herself apart from other school children and from her siblings as a quick and gifted learner. This ability, however, was constantly diminished by adults remarking on the waste of such a mind in a girl’s body. Mayreder’s early diaries are filled with complaints about her access to education, or rather, the lack thereof:

Ich leide entsetzlich. Zuerst sagt man mir, die Welt der antiken Poesie sei ein Paradis, das jedem ewig verschlossen bleibe, der der griechischen Sprache nicht mächtig sei, ... und dann antwortet man mir mit einem gleichgültigen Lächeln: “Du? Du bist ein Frauenzimmer, Du brauchst kein Griechisch.”<sup>343</sup>

In a later entry, Mayreder writes, “O Natur..., warum ließest du mich nicht Mann werden, wenn du mir unweibliche Gefühle gabst?”<sup>344</sup> These statements are reflective of Mayreder’s experience of coming of age; they are a mixture of ambition and

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<sup>342</sup> Hilde Schmölzer, *Rosa Mayreder. Ein Leben Zwischen Wirklichkeit Und Utopie* (Vienna: Promedia, 2002), 37. Translation: “I would give years of my life to be allowed to learn in their place.”

<sup>343</sup> Schmölzer, 37. Translation: “I’m suffering tremendously. First they tell me that the world of ancient poetry is a paradise, forever closed to anyone who does not speak Greek, ... then they answer me with a dismissive smile, ‘you? You’re a woman, you don’t need to speak Greek.’”

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. 38. Translation: “Oh nature, why did you not make me a man when you gave me all these unwomanly feelings?”

disillusionment based on her early observation of how the two genders were treated, in particular with regard to access to education. Growing up with brothers who were praised for their intellect while she was being groomed for marriage and motherhood led Mayreder later to become a prominent voice in the quest for women's education and school reform. Mayreder also writes about her impressions of watching her mother struggle to run a home and raise sixteen children while her father enjoyed a greater degree of freedom and autonomy in the home and greater respect outside of the home.<sup>345</sup> Mayreder grew up with a first hand experience of the very thing Karl thematizes in the story discussed above, "Keiner und Meiner." Mayreder's focus on career and her turning away from a more traditional life trajectory as depicted in "Keiner und Meiner" suggest that the public recognition for wives and mothers demanded by Karl was yet to become a reality for the nineteenth-century woman.

Mayreder sought to distance herself from a traditional femininity in more ways than just by her refusal of motherhood and domesticity. So deeply ingrained were the social prejudices against women's ability to contribute intellectually that she attempted to distance herself as much as possible from what would have been perceived as a feminine approach to writing.<sup>346</sup> Her diaries, which she kept from age fourteen to age eighty, were

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<sup>345</sup> See Rosa Mayreder, *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1905). Mayreder articulates her views on motherhood in more depth than her early diaries provide in her work, *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit*. Mayreder herself remained childless in her marriage to Karl Mayreder.

<sup>346</sup> See Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1990), 45. Battersby argues that women writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century would adopt a style that would now fall under the category of *écriture féminine*, as coined by feminist literary critic Helene Cixous. They did this to avoid connotations of masculinity and sterility when entering the then male-dominated sphere of writing. *Ecriture feminine*, as first defined by Cixous in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa," is generally circular in logic and sequence; it supposedly follows a more organic and "natural" style of writing that is uniquely feminine and innately female. The concept of *écriture féminine* was later criticized for its essentialist argument that defines men and women as intrinsically different, thus perpetuating traditional dichotomies of male and female roles. Noteworthy is that nineteenth-century women writers embraced this type of writing style because of the safe space created by it; in this way they

written on single loose-leaf papers and kept in a box rather than book format. She avoided citing names or writing about her day's events in a narrative fashion. Using initials to refer to people and focusing on her thoughts, impressions of the world around her, and ideas, Mayreder wanted to distance herself from the type of writing that she dismissively termed typical "Blaustrumpf" (bluestocking) activity.<sup>347</sup> Her use of this derisive term betrays how ingrained the stereotypes of the educated, or rather "miseducated," woman were. Rather than seeking to challenge the restrictions imposed on her by her gender, Mayreder, too, was caught in the social matrix of her time. She did not attempt to change minds about women and their intellectual abilities as much as she sought to distance herself from them, believing that by adopting a masculine-coded writing style, she would gain the respect and admiration of those dominating the writing and publishing world of the time.

Mayreder addresses education and women's schooling in several of her literary works. In her drama *Anda Renata*, Anda is being pushed into the role of wife and mother by her family while she longs to explore the world beyond the confines of domesticity. Her mother, herself a product of a society that deems it woman's ultimate goal to marry and reproduce, chides Anda for wanting to rebel against this tradition: "Was darf Dir wichtiger und teurer sein, / Als das Geschick des Weibes zu erfüllen? / Kannst du ein Ziel

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were not challenging traditional gender dichotomies any more than necessary. Mayreder, on the other hand, sought to distance herself from this "feminine" writing style not because she resisted traditional gender dichotomies but because she believed herself to operate outside of this gender matrix. Her writings on the genius in "Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit" (A Survey of the Woman Problem) explains how she believed some members of her sex to transcend their gender limitations (just as members of the opposite sex could do as well), forming a "synthetischer Mensch" (synthetized person) that defied normative gender boundaries (her understanding of "true genius").

<sup>347</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Mein Pantheon. Lebenserinnerungen* (Dornach: Rudolf Geering Verlag, 1988), 32-33. A 'bluestocking' is an educated woman, at times (but not necessarily), a writer. The term carries a negative connotation, implying a woman who is frumpy, socially inept, and preoccupied with learning and books.

mir nennen, so geheiligt / Wie jenes, das die Ehe in sich birgt?“<sup>348</sup> Anda’s mother represents the voice of the previous generation of women, who Mayreder portrays as being more complacent with the role of domesticity assigned to their sex. Anda, on the other hand, is representative of a younger generation, dissatisfied and unaccepting of the limitations imposed on them. She refuses the veil that is offered to her, on the day of her communion, objecting, “Soll ich mich beugen, wenn ich nicht verstehe? / Soll ich erfüllen, was mir widerstrebt?“<sup>349</sup> Anda does not want her eyes covered; she wants to experience the world without a “Schleier” (veil) impeding her vision.<sup>350</sup> Moreover, Anda makes plain that a life of unquestioning servitude to a husband chosen for her is not for her and is willing to rebel against familial and social expectations at the cost of her material well being. She leaves home, looking to experience life and to educate herself in a way that was withheld from her in the conventional home of her youth.

Perun, the man to whom she was promised by her parents, comes to see her in the home she has made for herself and is surprised to find so many books everywhere. He says to her with contempt: “Hier gibt’s zu viele Bücher! Zwar als Schmuck / Sind die verblichenen goldnen Bände schön! / Ich selbst hab’ unter Büchern nie gelebt.”<sup>351</sup> Not only does Perun express an inability to understand why someone like Anda – a woman – would need to surround herself with books, but he also betrays his own lack of education

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<sup>348</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Anda Renata. Mysterium in zwei Teilen und zwölf Bildern* (Vienna: Krey, 1934), 31. Translation: “What could be more important and more valuable to you/ than fulfilling your womanly destiny?/ Name me one other goal that is as holy/ as the one that comes with marriage?”

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 17. Translation: “Should I bow down to what I do not understand/ should I fulfill that which repels me?”

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 67. Translation: “There are too many books here! As decoration/ the gilded volumes are indeed pleasing/ I, however, have never lived with books.”

and interest in matters of the intellect. Perun continues to pursue Anda with an interest in the physicality of their relationship, showing little regard for her character or intellectual contributions. Once Anda agrees to consummate their relationship, Perun loses interest in her altogether, rejecting her and the unborn child resulting from their night together.

When she tells him of her pregnancy, Perun says, “Das Los des Weibes ist das meine nicht; / Natur hat Dich gebunden, mich befreit.”<sup>352</sup> With that, Perun absolves himself of any responsibility to Anda or their child, and Anda is left to care for their illegitimate offspring on her own.

Mayreder’s drama thematizes several women’s issues, among which women’s education and preparation for life are central. Anda represents the type of woman that is dissatisfied with the limited prospects allotted to her gender and who rebels against the norm, venturing to dictate her own destiny. Anda’s story is not a successful one and she is more often compared to a witch and a monster (by the other characters) than a heroine. Mayreder’s text thus suggests that a woman who went against the convention of her time was not only likened to a witch, but also fated to a life of hardship and isolation. Anda withdraws from the world into a small cottage in the woods, where she lives outside of society and with no familial support as she attempts to care for herself and her child. She ends up surrendering her child to a group of witches that come and take the baby away at birth, leaving Anda a lonely figure representative of failure, despair, and suffering. Noteworthy is that she takes on a tormented yet idealized image in the minds of the townspeople nearby. She becomes known for her reclusiveness as much as her beauty, her social missteps nearly forgotten and replaced with stories of her daring, yet admirable, eccentricity.

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 97. Translation: “Mine is not a woman’s fate/ nature tethered you but has set me free.”



Mayreder thus shows that the woman willing to eschew convention and to rebel against the norm is not met with an outcome as simple as a good/bad dichotomy. Anda neither succeeds nor fails in her quest to gain knowledge, experience, and autonomy. In many ways, she finds what she desired; she is the master of her household and she has gained unrestricted access to any books she might desire to read along with all of the knowledge those volumes hold. Yet she pays the price with isolation and rejection. She first rejects the conventional motherhood that would have followed her arranged marriage only to be rejected as a mother and denied the chance to have a child at all. The witches' taking of her child implies that there is no space for a mother figure such as Anda; she simply cannot be read as maternal or domestic once she has chosen the path of education and enlightenment. Anda is at once admirable for her strength and determination while also made pitiful through her lack of human connections. She is both stigmatized for her choices while also romanticized and admired for her eccentricity and beauty. Mayreder thus hails the woman seeking a life outside of convention as a powerful and admirable figure while also portraying her in a way that reads more cautionary than celebratory.

In *Idole*, Mayreder once more offers a female figure that is eccentric in her desire for education and her rejection of normalized femininity. Gisa, the main character, expresses no interest in the material things that fascinate her friend Nelly, who functions as the prototype of nineteenth-century femininity. While Nelly is endowed with all of the charms and attributes that make her a desirable catch, Gisa is dismissed as being too bookish and too introverted. Not only does Gisa sense her role as the eccentric, she is deeply troubled by it and questions what kind of fulfillment she can get from a life that seeks to limit and constrict her:

Warum war ich denn hier? Warum war ich hereingebannt in diese hässliche und traurige Welt? Warum zitterte in mir ein unbegreifliches Wesen vor Schmerz und Sehnsucht? Warum lebte ich als ich, und sollte mein ganzes Leben lang nur den armseligen kleinen Ausschnitt der Welt sehen, der im Bereiche dieses Ichs lag? Und die unbegrenzte Fülle der Daseinsmöglichkeiten, die unerschöpfliche Mannigfaltigkeit der Erscheinungen, sie war mir verschlossen auf ewig?<sup>353</sup>

In this troubled monologue, Gisa reveals her desperation at being confined to a life of physical and intellectual boundaries based on her gender belonging. She finds a world that is limited, sad, and ugly. Gisa demonstrates an understanding of the world as full of possibilities; the world of her imagination has boundless goods to offer. By contrast, the world of her reality fills her with pain and longing, it reeks of repression and disappointment. She questions how long she will have to live with the knowledge of what exists but is forbidden fruit to her.

Like Anda, Gisa stays true to her desire for autonomy and knowledge and does not cave to social pressures to change her ways. In addition to craving knowledge, Gisa craves the attention of her father's physician, the brooding and intelligent Dr. Lamaris. Gisa thinks of herself as his intellectual equal and is convinced that he will return her affections. When talking to her friend Nelly about Dr. Lamaris, Gisa professes her understanding of a masculinity that is counter to social expectations and that allows for much greater equality between the sexes. Nelly questions Gisa's interest in Dr. Lamaris, who does not meet the requirements of normative masculinity. He is too meek and reserved in the opinion of Nelly, who speaks of an ideal man as someone who is "ein ganzer Mann, vor dem alle zittern und sich beugen" and "ein Mann mit einem gewaltigen

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<sup>353</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Idole* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1899), 21-22. Translation: "Why was I here? Why was I brought into this sad and ugly world? Why was there an inexplicable trembling in me of pain and desire? Why should I live life as me, why should I only get to see the meager little section of the world, which I happen to occupy? And the unlimited possibilities of existence, the inexhaustible multiplicity of being, that is to be denied to me forever?"

Willen, der mich zu seiner Sklavin machen könnte durch einen Wink mit seinen Augenbrauen.”<sup>354</sup> Nelly’s understanding of masculinity reads like the stereotypical complement to the type of femininity revered and romanticized by nineteenth-century society; he is the violent, authoritative, and active aggressor to her passive “damsel in distress.” Gisa, by contrast, finds the kind of man described by Nelly repelling and frightening. She argues for a masculinity that is respectful, intelligent, willing to be led as much as to lead, and interested in woman as a partner and not a “Sklavin” (slave).<sup>355</sup>

While Gisa is convinced that she has found the embodiment of that type of masculinity in Dr. Lamaris, Nelly mocks her, saying, “einen solchen Mann giebt es ja gar nicht in Wirklichkeit!”<sup>356</sup> She scorns Gisa’s fantasy as “etwas ganz Unmännliches” (something very unmanly) and, finally, as “ein Mann mit einem Frauenherzen!” (a man with a woman’s heart).<sup>357</sup> Despite Nelly’s derision, Gisa remains convinced of her success in winning Dr. Lamaris’ heart, basing her assumptions on their intellectual compatibility. She knows that Dr. Lamaris appreciates her intelligence and her interest in reading and philosophizing, believing that he, too, wants an intellectual equal as his match in matrimony. To Gisa’s surprise, Dr. Lamaris leaves town after his care of her father comes to an end and does so without so much as a goodbye to her. Her brother encounters him much later and reports to Gisa on their chance meeting. He tells Gisa that Dr. Lamaris is married and has a child, noting that his wife looks uncannily like Gisa,

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 48. Translation: “a real man, who is feared and admired by all” and “a man with a powerful will, who can make me his slave with a mere raise of his eyebrow.”

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 49. Translation: “such a man does not exist in reality!”

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

mirroring her in both appearance and mannerisms. The wife, however, differs from Gisa in one critical way; she is said to be not very bright and to sit mostly silently while attending to their baby, seldom contributing to the conversations between her husband and his friends.

Mayreder's story thus makes clear the place of the intellectual woman in nineteenth-century Austria. As much as Gisa believed in her ability to find love and mutual respect from someone appreciative of her intellect and thirst for knowledge, she is proven wrong in no uncertain terms. The woman Dr. Lamaris chooses as his wife is like Gisa in every way but in intellect. Where Gisa is direct, outspoken, and well read, the former is quiet, reserved, and dull. In the end, Gisa's idol more closely fits the description of masculinity proffered by her friend Nelly in that he chooses a woman who is not his intellectual equal and to whom he can be a master and a patriarch. In this regard, Anda and Gisa's fates read as similarly dystopian. Both are rejected for their intellectual striving and punished for their lack of interest in motherhood and domesticity. While both figures read as honorable for staying true to their goals and ambitions, they also demonstrate how isolating and stigmatizing the life of the educated woman can be.

Mayreder's story *Sein Ideal* addresses this same topic from a different angle. Unlike Gisa and Anda, the female figure of *Sein Ideal* is anything but intellectually driven and intimidatingly strong-willed. This story centers on Emilie, who is portrayed through the eyes of her new husband, Herr Müller. Emilie is first presented as the embodiment of idealized nineteenth-century femininity. She is angelic, subservient, quiet, beautiful, and innocent. Herr Müller falls in love with her at first sight, recognizing in her the fruition of all that he desires from a wife and mother to his children. In his pre-marital

euphoria, Herr Müller does recognize that Emilie's smile appears to be empty of emotion and "nicht gerade geistreich"<sup>358</sup> (not especially clever), but he is blinded by his attraction to her beauty. A mere five weeks after the initial meeting, the two are engaged. Herr Müller is beside himself with joy, "daß er ein so wohlerzogenes, häusliches, sanftmütiges, engelsreiches Geschöpf sein eigen nennen durfte."<sup>359</sup>

Their happiness only too quickly turns into discord as the two settle into married life and the everyday trials that come with life in a shared home. As the story is told from Herr Müller's perspective, the marital discontent is described as stemming from his dissatisfaction with her lack of intellect. She is far too concerned with the petty gossip of her acquaintances, too preoccupied with trivial matters of domesticity, and too involved with the quotidian. She is, in essence, the opposite of the Gisa and Anda figures Mayreder created for her other stories. Suddenly, her angelic appearance and naiveté no longer hold the same appeal for Herr Müller as they did before they married. Herr Müller tries in vain to change her and to steer her towards his interests, only to be met with resistance and discontent from Emilie. Their marriage becomes a trap for both, culminating in Herr Müller's violent outburst during which he hits his wife. Theirs has become anything but the idealized union of his expectations. Instead, the stark reality of their domestic dissonance sets in and Herr Müller wonders whether Emilie is not similarly dissatisfied with him as he is with her. It becomes apparent how little the two know each other and how much is left unsaid in their relationship.

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<sup>358</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Sein Ideal* (Pierson: Dresden 1897), 2.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 3. Translation: "that he could call such a well raised, mild mannered, angelic creature his own."

Not only does Mayreder present a dystopian image of a relationship between two strangers, she once again points to the disconnect that results from a chasm between expectations and reality. Emilie's story differs from that of Anda and Gisa in that Emilie is not a strong, autonomous female figure. She remains the meek, subservient, and child-like figure of Herr Müller's initial enthrallment well after they wed and he comes to know her better. Herr Müller, a schoolteacher to whom knowledge and education matters, is disappointed to find no hidden depth to his young wife. With *Sein Ideal*, Mayreder portrays a reality that is akin to the one presented in the article titled "Frauenerziehung" from *Der Bazar* discussed above. In "Frauenerziehung," Bölte argues that husbands both resent their wives' lack of education and intellect while simultaneously withholding the opportunity to become educated from their spouses and daughters. In *Sein Ideal*, Herr Müller embodies this very figure of the confused husband, both falling in love with Emilie because of her naiveté and then resenting her for not turning into his intellectual equal once they enter into matrimony. Bölte's article also credits educated women with having achieved their successes on their own. They are remarkable because they manage to build themselves up in a culture that does not promote or sustain women's access to education.

Mayreder's female protagonists in *Sonderlinge* (Gisa) and *Anda Renata* (Anda) in many respects exemplify the self-made woman described by Bölte. Both women choose knowledge over conformity, books over people. They read as admirable and inspiring in their ability to overcome social obstacles and to achieve a certain level of autonomy and self-determination despite the many restrictions imposed on them. What Bölte's article in *Der Bazar* fails to address as poignantly as Mayreder's fiction is the cost at which these

accomplishments are won. Mayreder presents her strong women with a cautionary tone; these figures do not read as traditionally successful. They are, however, neither idealized nor vilified by Mayreder; theirs are complex stories that point to the manifold challenges and obstacles faced by women who opted for a life outside of the nineteenth-century norm.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach was equally aware of the obstacles encountered by women seeking education or a profession outside of the home, and she addressed the role of the resistant father in her autobiographical works early on. Struggling to convince her father to allow her to write and publish, she reports battling popular prejudices against the writing woman as suffering from “Kränklichkeit” (sickliness) and “Hässlichkeit” (ugliness).<sup>360</sup>

In her story *Komtesse Paula*, Ebner-Eschenbach demonstrates how women’s education meets with familial opposition and produces class anxiety. The countess is eighteen years of age at the beginning of the story and lives comfortably under the oppressive thumb of her parents. Nowhere is this made more evident than with the examples of her education and her constantly thwarted desire for knowledge. In one early scene, the countess is patiently waiting while her father sits and reads one of the books that she herself wants to read. Watching her father as he struggles to progress through the material, she takes pity on him and requests that he put an end to his work for the day and join her on a walk. Her father is relieved to receive her offer and sets the book aside, asking her whether the pages he has read for the day will suffice for her reading later. It is thus revealed that Paula’s father seeks to censor and approve of all her reading material

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<sup>360</sup> Barbara Denscher, *Kunst und Kultur in Österreich: das 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: C. Brandstätter, 1999), 86.

prior to her having access to it by reading it first. In a scene both comic and tragic, we see him enforcing his authority over his daughter, who is evidently much more at ease with the works from which he seeks to protect her, by monitoring her every step towards self-education. Not only does Paula not challenge this system, she humors her father by thanking him for the pages he read and assuring him that it will be more than enough for her to enjoy later.<sup>361</sup>

This censorship of Paula's education goes back to her childhood days, when she repeatedly found forbidden books or came across contradictory information in her education. Her interest in historical and political texts informs her worldview regarding social and class equality, leading her to take on a social egalitarian perspective counter to the views of her aristocratic milieu. Her ideas sit poorly with her parents and her friends, who label her an eccentric and unrefined ("unelegant") idealist.<sup>362</sup> Paula's father indulges her idiosyncrasies to some extent, but is particularly watchful when it comes to her access to books and reading material, which he blames for her eccentricities. Ebner-Eschenbach thus demonstrates the dual nature of class and privilege as they affected women of the nineteenth century. Paula is privileged enough to have access to an education while also being too privileged to require any training or preparation for a life outside of marriage and leisure. Her father wants her to be educated in a way that is appropriate to her class and gender: "er wünschte für seine Tochter eine gute 'oberflächliche' Erziehung."<sup>363</sup> The books he gives her are chosen based on their

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<sup>361</sup> Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, "Komtesse Paula," *Gesammelte Schriften von Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Vierter Band* (Berlin: Verlag von Gebrüder Paetel, 1893) 422.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid, 422.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid, 411. Translation: "He wanted his daughter to have a good, 'superficial,' education."



attractive binding and not their content; they thus reinforce the association of femininity with beauty (and not intellect).

Paula's mother, who models normative aristocratic femininity, presents the counter example that demonstrates that Paula is unique in her surroundings. Her mother is primarily concerned with aesthetics and appearances at the cost of genuine relationships and interactions. These concerns become particularly evident in her relationship with Paula from an early age. Paula wants nothing more than to please her mother. While she relates to her father through hunting and horseback riding, clothes and fashion pave the path to her mother's heart.<sup>364</sup> Paula, who is better at riding and hunting than deciphering the appropriate use of fashion to appease her mother, as we saw in chapter four, deviates from appropriate nineteenth-century femininity.

Paula's failed attempts to catch her mother's undivided attention begin at an early age. Given limited access to her mother, Paula studies her for clues as to how to win her affections and concludes, "Mama freute sich immer; um so mehr, je hübscher ich angezogen war. Ich bemerkte, daß sie mich am liebsten hatte, wenn ich mein graues mit Pelz verbrämtes Sammetkleidchen trug."<sup>365</sup> Paula notices at a young age that it matters little how smart she is as long as she is dressed to please and is charming in her mannerisms. In her child-like naiveté, Paula believes the grey, fur-trimmed dress to hold the key to her mother's heart and gradually refuses to wear anything but the dress she sees as the key to her mother's affection. Her governess tries in vain to steer Paula toward

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<sup>364</sup> For more on Paula's relationship to horses, riding, and masculinity, see chapter four of this dissertation.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., 414. Translation: "mama always liked it best when I was nicely dressed. I noticed, that she loved me the most when I wore my grey, fur trimmed silk dress."

another dress only to be met with the child's "Verzweiflungs-Szenen" (tantrums).<sup>366</sup> The vehemence with which Paula endows the dress with the ability to make her mother take note of her is both humorous and tragic. Despite her governess' protests, Paula wears the wool and fur garment well into the warm spring season, noting, "Ich glühte nur so darin und meinte vor Hitze zu vergehen, aber – mit Entzücken!"<sup>367</sup>

Although not for a lack of trying, Paula fails to navigate the fashion codes of her time appropriately and ends up disappointing her mother rather than charming her. The wool and fur dress that represented wealth and status so adequately during the winter season is outdated and out of style come spring. During one such spring day, Paula is playing in a park with other children when her mother appears with her friends. The young girl tells her playmates, "Seht, - das ist meine Mama, die größte, die schönste von allen Mamas!"<sup>368</sup> While the other children look, one playmate scoffs at Paula's remark and calls her mother old and wrinkled. Lobbing the worst insult imaginable at an aristocratic woman – attacking her beauty and grace – the girl angers Paula to a degree that leads her to attack her playmate. After the governesses break up the fight, Paula seeks refuge in her mother's arms, only to be quickly disabused of the latter's affections. Not only is Paula's mother appalled at her daughter's behavior, she takes one look at her inappropriately chosen wool and fur dress and pushes the child away from her. Without

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid. Translation: "I burned underneath it and felt like I would die from the heat, but – with delight!"

<sup>368</sup> Ibid., 415. Translation: "Look! There is my mama, the best and most beautiful of all the mamas!"

so much as a second glance at Paula, she turns to the governess and chides her for not dressing the girl in the proper recently purchased “Frühlingstoilette”<sup>369</sup> (spring outfit).

This scene is particularly telling of gender and class dynamics in the nineteenth century. Paula’s idolization of her mother as the “most beautiful,” her outraged reaction to her mother’s beauty being challenged by another child, and her mother’s reaction to Paula’s inappropriate dress reinforces the idea that a woman’s realm was that of aesthetics and appearances. As fashion historian Phillipe Perrot notes, a woman in her opulent dress became the “ornamental object” that signaled the family’s status and wealth.<sup>370</sup> Clothes were endowed with a sign-value that was often more important than their use-value.<sup>371</sup> Beauty – and the thorough understanding of how fashion, clothes, and outward appearances were used to communicate – thus played a significant role in the nineteenth-century’s woman role as “ornamental object,” and, by extension, as role signifier of her family’s wealth and status. As a young child, Paula understands that clothes matter but has not yet deciphered the semiotic system of which they are a part. She understands the importance of clothing before she understands how to implement their use successfully.

Ebner-Eschenbach does not, however, portray the women of her story as mindless dolls, unable to see the role accorded to them by society. They are not the Emilies of Mayreder’s *Sein Ideal*. The women of Ebner-Eschenbach’s story participate in this gender matrix because it is the only space and role assigned to them and because there is

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Phillipe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. Trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 35.

<sup>371</sup> For more on Perrot’s concept of “sign-value” and “use-value,” see chapter one of this dissertation.

little room for transgression. As Paula's mother notes, "Man macht das Spiel mit, liebe Paula, weil es so üblich ist."<sup>372</sup> In other words, even Paula's mother who appears to be compliant with the role assigned to her is cognizant of the dynamics at play and engages with social expectations in a self-aware and self-reflective manner. Paula's mother is neither a victim nor a dynamic figure, seeking to challenge norms and to rebel against the status quo. She is both knowing and resigned.

Ebner-Eschenbach's story thus demonstrates how women of the upper class were equally yet differently disadvantaged when it came to education and learning in comparison to their middle-class counterparts. The story of Paula and her mother can be read in response to the articles in *Der Bazar* that tout the need for women's education and appeal to fathers and husbands to prepare their wives and daughters better for a life outside of the home. While the struggle of the middle-class woman, as presented in stories such as "Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden" and "die Frauenerziehung," center on women's lack of life skills outside of the domestic, the opposite can be said of the upper-middle and upper-class woman. Paula has no shortage of skills and finds ways to access knowledge despite her father's reluctance. She has access to books, tutors, cultural events, and a plethora of interesting and educated people in her life. Hers is not a problem of lack as much as a problem of privilege. Unlike the girl seeking employment in "Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden," Paula will never have to support herself independently and she will never be forced to put hard-earned skills to work. Her privilege both grants her access to experiences and lessons unavailable to her lower-class counterparts and prevents her from putting those to practical use. Most tragic is Paula's mother's demonstration of how such a life leads to knowledge yet compliance and resignation. One

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<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 425. Translation: "one plays the game because that is what one does."

plays the game because there is only this one game to be played: “Man macht das Spiel mit, liebe Paula, weil es so üblich ist.” Another reality, or rather, the spaces in which women can create a different reality for themselves, is offered to the reader in stories such as Mayreder’s *Anda Renata*. These spaces – the outskirts of society, the isolated cabins in the woods – are not welcoming or inviting. These are the spaces occupied by women forgoing traditional femininity at the cost of community, family, companionship, and security.

Early in her career, while still writing under the pseudonym Otto Stern, Louise Otto gave an invited lecture under the title “Zur Frauenemanzipation. Über die gesellige Stellung und geistige Bildung der Frauen in England, Amerika, Frankreich und vornehmlich in Deutschland.”<sup>373</sup> In this lecture, Otto argued that the women of her time lacked an interest in politics and world news not out of a lack of understanding, but out of the desire to avoid ridicule and scorn. Otto also faults the premature termination of women’s schooling right at the age when a girl begins to develop an understanding of and curiosity about the world around her:

Es wird in unsern Schulen vielleicht alles gelehrt, was der weibliche Verstand bis in sein vierzehntes Jahr fassen kann – aber dann, in einem Alter, in dem alle Geisteskräfte sich erst recht zu entfalten beginnen, in dem wir erst die rechte Liebe zu wissenschaftlichen Interessen fassen, in dem wir erst einsehen können, wie notwendig es sei, sich Kenntnisse zu erwerben, wo wir erst die Fähigkeit gewinnen, nicht alles, was man uns sagt, auf Treu und Glauben blindlings hinzunehmen: – in einem solchen Alter wird die weibliche Bildung für vollendet betrachtet.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Louise Otto, “Zur Frauenemanzipation. Über die gesellige Stellung und geistige Bildung der Frauen in England, Amerika, Frankreich und vornehmlich in Deutschland” as quoted in Ruth Ellen Boetcher Joeres, *Die Anfänge der Deutschen Frauenbewegung: Louise Otto Peters* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1983). Translation of essay title: “On women’s emancipation. On the position and intellectual education of women in England, America, France, and particularly in Germany.”

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 78. Translation: “Perhaps everything is taught in our schools that girls up to age fourteen can understand – but then, just at the age when intellectual capabilities begin to develop, when we truly find a love for scientific interests, just as we understand how necessary it is to gain knowledge, just as we gain the

Otto points further to the incongruities in a woman's education and the expectations placed on her, constructing an argument similar to the example found in Mayreder's *Sein Ideal*. Otto writes, "zu *Puppen* der Männer werden sie [Frauen] gemacht and sollten doch ihre *Gefährtinnen* sein!"<sup>375</sup> She finds fault with how women are raised to be doll-like in their innocence and passivity while expected to fulfill the role of companion and partner once wed. In Mayreder's story, this conflict between the imagined and the real destroys both spouses' happiness. Neither gender is fulfilled when expectations and reality are not made to mirror each other in the slightest.

Otto addresses the same disconnect that ensues when fantasy and reality collide. In a world where the genders are kept separate for the entirety of their youth and then are expected to form unions and households together, the path to a successful marriage is a difficult one. Otto proposes various steps to rectifying this situation, focusing on a common education as the primary means with which to create greater gender equality and a greater understanding between the sexes. First, children of both sexes should be instructed in world history ("Weltgeschichte")<sup>376</sup> as a living and ongoing concern. Instead of memorizing dates, battles, and names, children should focus on the debates surrounding historical events and their application to contemporary life. Second, girls' education should not end prematurely, at the time of confirmation. And third, girls and women should be granted mobility. Otto writes,

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ability not to take blindly everything said to us as gospel – at this age girls' education is regarded as complete.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., 79. Emphasis in original. Translation: "women are being made into their *dolls* when they should be their husband's *companions*."

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 80.

Die dritte Forderung aber, wenn das Interesse der Frauen am Staatsleben eine Wahrheit werden soll, ist: *dass die Frauen sich überhaupt freier durchs Leben bewegen lernen und bewegen dürfen*. Dies eben kann zunächst nur durch die *individuelle* Bildung befördert werden; denn nur ein selbstständiges Herz führt zum selbstständigen Handeln.<sup>377</sup>

Otto thus presents the crux of the argument for women's education: knowledge is the path to personal freedom and *mobility*. If women are to be autonomous and self-sufficient members of society, they require the schooling and professional opportunities made available to their male counterparts. Those opportunities in turn lead to women's ability to move more freely through the different spaces otherwise unavailable to them. When it came to the topic of education, Otto, just like Mayreder and Ebner-Eschenbach, saw knowledge as the key to promoting personal freedom and gender equality.

Although the women's magazine *Der Bazar* was not far from presenting a similar view, a number of women writers, such as Otto, ventured to publish their own, women-run periodicals as a response to the popular press of the time. The following section will present the publishing work carried out by Otto and her fellow writers, demonstrating how these women took the act of "writing back" on the topic of school reform and education most seriously of all. Their self-published periodicals demonstrate how education reform figured prominently in the discourses on women's rights and gender equality.

#### **IV. Women Writers Writing Back and Women-Published Periodicals**

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<sup>377</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original. Translation: "The third condition, should women's interest in the state become a reality, is: *that women be taught and allowed to move freely through the world*. This can only come to fruition through the education of the *individual*; because only an independent heart can act autonomously."

The most overt act of writing back to the popular opinion of the time is evident in the publications put together by the aforementioned women writers themselves. Taking the act of selecting and publishing materials into their own hands, the writers involved with these woman-published periodicals demonstrated what they deemed important and valuable in appealing to women readers. In her article “Was sollen unsere Töchter lesen?” (What should our daughters be reading?) Denise Della Rossa offers an insight into the periodicals written and published by women of the nineteenth century.<sup>378</sup> The publishing industry of the time was still largely dominated by male writers and publishers, who, according to Della Rossa, set the program and tone of periodicals and determined which women writers were featured and how provocative or conservative their writings could be. Despite the emphasis on *Bildung* and social betterment through knowledge and education, the nineteenth-century woman was still relegated to home and hearth. Della Rossa notes that “women belonged to the *Bildungsbürgertum* only through their relationship to their fathers, brothers, or husbands.”<sup>379</sup> The 1848 uprisings, however, stirred up feelings of inequity within certain prominent women writers who wanted to participate in the social reform movement in a more vigorous way. Thus, a number of women’s magazines came to be founded by women and geared at a female reading audience. First came Louise Otto’s *Die Frauenzeitung* (1848-1852), which was later superseded by the collaboration between Otto and Auguste Schmidt on *Neue Bahnen* (1866-1919), and then last, Helene Lange’s *Die Frau* (1893-1943).

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<sup>378</sup> See Denise Della Rossa, “‘Was sollen unsere Töchter lesen?’ Recommended Reading and Literary *Bildung* in the Women’s Periodical Press”. *Challenging Separate Spheres. Female Bildung in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Germany*. ed. Marjanne E. Gooz  (NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 109-133.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., 110.



The main goal of these publications was to inform. The articles and writers featured in these three publications were selected with a focus on “Bildung” (education) rather than entertainment. Moreover, Della Rossa maintains that these publications aimed to build a “nineteenth-century female identity.”<sup>380</sup> Much as *Der Bazar* was creating an image of the ideal bourgeois wife and mother, *Die Frauenzeitung* was offering its version of the ideal informed and well-read woman. Each publication offered its take on a preferred version of femininity for its readership to emulate.

Otto founded *Die Frauenzeitung* in 1848 and spent the first two years publishing it in the city of Meissen. Della Rossa notes that the paper was more moderate in tone than other political publications of the time yet determined to challenge assumptions about gender norms and to promote the works of women writers and the ideal of gender equity through education. Despite being more temperate than other publications of its time, Otto’s *Frauenzeitung* fell under political scrutiny in Meissen and in 1850, only two years after the publication’s debut, Saxony passed a law declaring that only men were permitted to publish a newspaper. Since it so obviously targeted *Die Frauenzeitung*, the law came to be known as “Lex Otto.”<sup>381</sup> Otto then moved her paper to Thuringia, where she was able to continue production for another two years.

Otto was candid about her mission to produce a paper that would inspire social reform and women’s emancipation. She offered these goals in the inaugural issue’s book review section, listing their criteria in selecting the literature to be reviewed and published. Otto was unable to keep the publication going in Thuringia much longer than

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 113.

in Meissen, where she once more met with opposition from the local government; another two years later production ceased for good. It was not until thirteen years later that Otto teamed with Auguste Schmidt and the two of them founded the newspaper *Neue Bahnen*, which, at fifty-three years of publication, was far more successful than its predecessor. *Neue Bahnen* served as the newspaper for the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (General Union of German Women), an organization that was also founded by Otto and Schmidt and that worked for the betterment of education and employment opportunities for women. According to Della Rossa, this newspaper was meant to appeal to a broader audience and to enable “real” change: “with the loss of some of the earlier idealism, realism gained now in importance.”<sup>382</sup> Della Rossa sees *Neue Bahnen* as an example of women engaging in “Realpolitik.” The newspaper took on a more concrete and realistic approach to enacting change and was less steeped in ideology and theory, thereby becoming more accessible to readers from more moderate circles. More effective in reaching a widespread audience, it lasted for over half a century.

While Otto may have compromised some of the radical ideals that drove her work in *Die Frauenzeitung*, her more restrained approach won *Neue Bahnen* far more success. *Der Bazar*, in turn, with its more tempered voice in promoting women’s education and greater equality between the spouses was less overtly emancipatory in its aims and could thus potentially influence the views of the mainstream female reading public. Texts such as “Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden” and “Die Wahl eines Gatten” appeared among fashion plates and articles on needlepoint, making less overt requests for women’s rights but possibly finding more listeners due to its more tempered approach.

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid., 114.

## V. Conclusion

Although the writers and the magazine articles analyzed above demonstrate how *Der Bazar* and writings by women focused on education as a vehicle for personal freedom and improvement, which in turn could benefit society as a whole, women's schooling underwent little overall change in the nineteenth century. The 1860s witnessed a peak in women's quest for education reform as illustrated by the sheer magnitude of organizations addressing the topic, the amount of flyers and pamphlets informing readers about it, and the number of lectures and public events intended to inform and persuade anti-reformers to support the cause.<sup>383</sup> By the 1870s, however, the movement lost much of its momentum and women were denied even the few victories won during the prior decade. According to Albisetti, "by 1879 women had explicitly been barred from entering all German universities and from being certified as physicians."<sup>384</sup>

The articles published in *Der Bazar* as well as the women's fiction analyzed here support Albisetti's claim that women's schooling and access to knowledge figured prominently in discourses on gender during the mid nineteenth century. As noted, the articles in *Der Bazar* were structured in a way that offered ideas for change or pointed to the pitfalls of a society that groomed women to be permanent dependents. By contrast, literary works such as *Anda Renata*, *Idole*, and *Komtesse Paula* focus more ardently on the consequences of rigid gender dichotomies that relegated women to the role of wife and mother. The women writers' texts differ most notably from the texts in *Der Bazar* in their featuring of female figures already inhabiting non-sanctioned spaces or presenting non-normative behaviors. These figures are depicted as eccentrics and recluses. They pay

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<sup>383</sup> Albisetti, 93.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

the price for challenging the status quo, for seeking self-sufficiency and knowledge, and for pursuing a life outside of the domestic sphere. Alternately, the figure of Emilie in *Sein Ideal* presents the consequences of conforming to traditional femininity, and thus Mayreder argues that the unquestioning adherence to normative gender roles does not guarantee social and marital harmony either.

In the end, both modes of writing – a fashion magazine aimed at women and writings by women – pointed to a need for improved education and professional opportunities for women as a way of providing greater gender equality and social mobility. By focusing on marriage and greater harmony between spouses as a result of educating women (“Die Frauenerziehung,” “Sein Ideal,”) these writers sought to dispel the fear of nineteenth-century society that the educated woman would reject her “natural” role of wife and mother. At the same time, writings by women about women seeking to escape the confines of domesticity (“Komtesse Muschi,” “Anda Renata,” “Idole,”) offered a foreboding look at life outside of society’s norms.

## Conclusion

The German fashion magazine *Der Bazar*, the French *La Mode Illustrée*, and the American *Harper's Bazar* functioned on an international level, sharing images and articles and collaborating on editorial contributions in hopes of creating widely recognized publications for large-scale consumption. As the editors of *Der Bazar* wrote, the magazines aimed to establish a “Weltruf” as a “Weltblatt.”<sup>385</sup> Nineteenth-century femininity, like gender and class roles in general, thus became a product of broader discourses shaped by many voices and ideologies. This construction of class and gender roles on an international level begs the question of what remained national and particular to a given place and culture. By looking at how *Der Bazar* presented the image of the German wife and mother and at the language used to signal a specifically national way of performing gender and class, this dissertation has offered insight into the process of forming a “German” identity during the mid to late-nineteenth century. My analysis of the works written by German and Austrian women writers of the time and the ways in which those texts “wrote back” to these discourses on femininity reveals a more nuanced and complex social landscape.

*Der Bazar* relied predominantly on constructions of the “German” woman in contrast to a foreign “Other” to define national identity. “German” included Austrian women and women of other German-speaking nations, whose shared language, history, and culture made them a part of the larger whole in contrast to the women of other European and non-European nations. While the magazine differentiated German women from other Western or European women, women of eastern and southern geographical regions provided the real point of contrast. Articles such as “Die Crinoline auf

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<sup>385</sup> *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, January 1869, 1.

Madagascar,”<sup>386</sup> “Die kleinen Füße der chineschen Frauen,”<sup>387</sup> and “Die öffentlichen Bäder in der Türkei”<sup>388</sup> presented dichotomies that positioned the German woman against the exotic and unruly “Other,” signaling to readers the way in which German femininity stood out from and was implicitly superior to that of different nations. Articles such as “Die Deutsche und Die Französin”<sup>389</sup> in turn showed how the fashion magazine imagined the German woman to differ from her French counterpart while offering insight into the hierarchy of cultures and nations created by the imperialist ideology dominating popular perceptions of the time. The French woman, as caricatured in “Die Deutsche und Die Französin” differed from her German counterpart in her approach to her household; her wardrobe, and her social circle are distinct and particular to her French upbringing and culture. She was, however, not characterized by the implicitly inferior and ignorant way of understanding the world as presented with the examples of Chinese and African women in “Die kleinen Füße der chineschen Frauen” and “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar” respectively. Thus, as *Der Bazar* created what Kirsten Belgum terms “imagined communities,”<sup>390</sup> it relied on shared traditions, similarities in cultures, and geographical proximity to define the boundaries of inclusion.

Rosa Mayreder, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Louise Otto offered their views on what it meant to be a German(-speaking) woman, wife, and mother in their

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<sup>386</sup> “Die Crinoline auf Madagascar,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, February 1863.

<sup>387</sup> “Die kleinen Füße der chineschen Frauen,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, February 1863.

<sup>388</sup> “Die öffentlichen Bäder in der Türkei” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, April 1863.

<sup>389</sup> “Die Deutsche und Die Französin,” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen Zeitung*, April 1862.

<sup>390</sup> See Kirsten Belgum, *Popularizing the nation: audience, representation and the production of identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln: U. of Nebraska Press, 1998).

works focusing on women and their roles in society. These women writers relied less on caricatures of the foreign woman as a way to define German femininity and instead focused on what differentiated the German wife and mother from her husband and the men in her life. Their stories construct juxtapositions between what it meant to be a proper middle and upper-class woman and what it meant to be a man of that same social class. Informed by their own upbringings and education, Otto, Mayreder, and Ebner-Eschenbach offered a different lens through which to view German and Austrian femininity from that through which fashion magazines such as *Der Bazar* presented the subject matter to its readership.

As both *Der Bazar* and the works by these three women writers centered on the lives of nineteenth-century women, the texts and images presented to readers concentrated mainly on the domestic – the nineteenth-century woman’s “natural” habitat. Clothing, fashion, the home, children, and domesticity were mainstays in the literature focused on the nineteenth-century woman’s life. Items that were both associated with femininity and played a role in women’s mobility (physical, geographical, social) were particularly telling of the roles and spaces allotted to women and the flexibility and freedom associated with them. A look at the corset and the crinoline (as symbols of physical mobility), the shoe and the riding habit (as symbols of geographical mobility) and, finally, at women’s education (as a vehicle of social mobility) has revealed how the fashion and magazine world and prominent women’s voices of the time engaged in the discourse surrounding women’s lives and social roles through the lens of different types of mobility.

A case in point is the treatment of the high-heeled shoe. Unsurprisingly, *Der Bazar* was filled with depictions of women on walks (wearing “Promenadeanzüge” – walking costumes) and wearing heeled and ornately decorated footwear. Likewise, small children of both sexes were depicted at play with similarly impractical footwear adorning their feet. In response, Mayreder’s *Sein Ideal* thematizes women’s (im)mobility by depicting a young married couple on their honeymoon trip, the young wife unsuccessfully struggling to keep pace with her husband.<sup>391</sup> She blames her footwear and clothing for restricting her movements; he blames her. Mayreder’s work points to the conflicting messages aimed at the nineteenth-century woman, enforcing a passive and immobile femininity on the one hand (as was the case with many of the images and texts in *Der Bazar*) while faulting her when passivity and immobility became her only way of being (as addressed in *Sein Ideal*).

When it came to domesticity and accouterments of (im)mobility, the texts and lithographs in *Der Bazar* presented an adherence to these fashion items (the shoe, the corset, the crinoline) as the way in which the German wife and mother could signal her adherence to cultural expectations and her class and gender belonging. Conforming to these norms also signaled her national identity and pride, setting her apart from the less civilized and respectable women of other cultures. Ebner-Eschenbach, Otto, and Mayreder “wrote back” to this discourse on femininity and offered their perspective on what it meant to be a German and Austrian wife and mother. The texts by the women writers challenged the restrictions imposed by items such as the corset and the crinoline on women’s physical and geographical mobility. They criticized women’s fashionable footwear for its impracticality and offered images of the galloping and agile horsewoman

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<sup>391</sup> Rosa Mayreder, *Sein Ideal* (Pierson: Dresden 1897).



as counter-images to the more static and constrained figures in “Promenadenanzüge” as featured in *Der Bazar*. Their works offer female figures rebelling against the status quo, often signaling their non-conformity through their rejection of fashionable wear, and generally meeting with disapproval and isolation as a result.

The topic of women’s education provides a rare example of the works in *Der Bazar* and the writings by Otto, Mayreder, and Ebner-Eschenbach meeting in agreement. Texts such as “Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden”<sup>392</sup> and “Die Wahl eines Gatten”<sup>393</sup> featured in *Der Bazar* offered a critique of the established social order and educational system that only trained women for a life in the home. Women were permanent dependents, requiring the financial support provided by male family members to survive. Stories such as “Keiner und Meiner”<sup>394</sup> approached the topic from a different perspective, focusing on the difficulty and thanklessness of women’s work within the home, aiming to give voice to those often overlooked and undercompensated. The women writers “wrote back” in agreement; works such as *Anda Renata*, *Komtesse Paula*, *Idole*, and *Das Gemeindegeld* pointed to the marginalized role of the educated woman and to the ways in which education can better individuals, and by extension, their communities. Through books, reading, and studying on one’s own, a woman can seek and access information that is otherwise denied to her but the path to knowledge and intellectual refinement is arduous and often met with social and familial resistance.

While the texts in *Der Bazar* presented the need for women’s education in light of women’s roles in society (making them less dependent on the state or the men in their

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<sup>392</sup> “Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden.” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, January 1857.

<sup>393</sup> “Die Wahl eines Gatten.” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, July 1858.

<sup>394</sup> “Keiner und Meiner.” *Der Bazar, Illustrierte Damen-Zeitung*, February 1878.

homes), the women writers “writing back” focused on the individual woman’s right to and desire for knowledge for the intrinsic value thereof. The female figures of their fiction are of the middle and upper class and have no need to support themselves or to practice a skilled trade (unlike the woman in “Sie will Gesellschaftlerin werden”). Rather, they seek knowledge for the pleasure and value therein, often at the cost of familial relations and to the detriment of their social welfare. Theirs is a quest motivated by knowledge for knowledge’s sake, showing that women, too, sought the intellectual stimulation that was closely linked to masculinity and male privilege in the nineteenth century.

In her work, *Women Write Back*, Stephanie Hilger argues that the task of feminist scholarship today is to continue to unearth women’s works from the past and to continue to consider women’s writings when looking at a given time period and culture.<sup>395</sup> Women’s literary contributions – so often overlooked – provide a valuable lens through which to view class and gender dynamics. Their works have often been marginalized and excluded from literary canons, school reading lists, and university syllabi. As the digitalization of past literary works takes place, it is all the more pertinent to consider which works are deemed valuable enough to survive this move from the material to the digital and to ensure that women’s marginalization from mainstream culture and canon formations does not repeat itself yet again. My scholarship has provided a study of women writers who were celebrated and widely read and distributed during their lifetime but who have continued to slip from scholarly attention today. It has investigated the ways in which women (the target of enforced femininity) responded to the discourses on

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<sup>395</sup> See Stephanie M Hilger, *Women Write Back. Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790-1805*, New York: Rodopi, 2009.

gendered and class-specific behavior with models of femininity falling outside of the status-quo. My work has moreover traced the discourses that existed between the fashion magazines writing *at* women and the women writers “writing back,” illustrating how gender, class, and national identities were forged through an ongoing dialogue between the fashion and magazine industry and the women writers contributing to the nineteenth-century literary field.

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